WEBSTER

AN ODE

WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON

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WEBSTER

AN ODE

O nostrum et decus et columen!

1782–1852

By

Wm. Cleaver Wilkinson.

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I.

Ye see him truly, now :
Their hour and power is past
Who fain had shamed that brow :
It wears its crown at last.

Hail him, his countrymen !
First of your foremost few,
Given back to you again
Yet greater than ye knew.

Greater—for, good and great ;
Not false, as they forswore !
He, who to save the State
The State to please forbore.

Well may the State he saved—
Saved at such cost of blame,
While still her mood he braved—
Accord him, late, his fame !

II.

So sang the poet, rendered bold and wise
  By the fine joy he found in being just;
  Wise to foreknow what should be, therefore must,
Bold to foredate it with creating eyes.

But the State hearkening, jealous for her name,
  Heard that sharp challenge of her thanks and praise:
  What did he to deserve such meed? she says:
Speak out, lone voice, and here rehearse his claim.

O State, he said, for, lo, thou knowest it all,
  Might I be silent, and wouldst praise him thou!
  The public hand should wreathe this public brow,
And the great dead awaits his Country's call.

Rash individual voice, speak what thou will,
  To hear is mine, the sovereign State replies:
  Me it behooves to wait and to be wise,
With equal ear weighing the good, the ill.

O just and reverend State—the poet spake—
  Much musing lest ill heard so loud and long
  Have needs ere now full nigh forestalled the song,
I sing—for his, and thine, and mine own sake.

III.

At that not ancient date
Before thou grewest great,
He knew thee, and he loved thee well, O State!
For hearing oft thine early tale rehearsed,
The boy was from the first
In patriot wisdom versed.

Him his heroic sire
At evening by his fire
Taught the pure passion of his own desire—
Desire for thee that thou shouldst prosper long
And be too wise and strong
To do or suffer wrong.

Wide hopes he learned for thee,
His country, soon to be
Wide as his hopes outspread from sea to sea:
Yet were his hopes as wise as they were wide,
For conscience was as guide
And prophet to his pride.

Thence thee, O State, yet young,
He with prophetic tongue
Chid to sit still when sore with passion stung:
His age ripe earlier than thy longer youth,
With more experienced ruth,
Knew to advise thee truth.

True things for pleasant, he,
With Roman firmness free
From too much pity or awe, proposed to thee:
Such virtue of clear counsel, in the blood
Streams, an ennobling flood,
From father wise and good.

True things for pleasant.—VERA PRO GRATIS was the motto prefixed by Mr. Webster to a pamphlet edition of his seventh of March speech.

IV.

Bred in his father's simple school severe,
Where sober godly fear
And filial awe were dear,
He learned that saving sense
Of bond to duty, whence
Flow to us still these streams of good immense.

For not alone his fealty to the State
Rescued us in those great

Hinges of fear and fate,
When, under skies of gloom,
He, hearkening, knew the boom
That burst at last in thunder peals of doom :

His forty years of great example, too,
Staunchly, in all men's view,
To its own promise true,
A fashion slowly wrought
In us, unheeding taught,
Kindred with him in our habitual thought.

The man was more than the great words he spoke :
This weighted every stroke
Of speech that from him broke—
That grave Websterian speech !
What sovereign touch and reach
Empowered it from the man, to tone and teach !

So, mother State, our schooling once begun
Under thy WASHINGTON
Advanced with this thy son :
His equal mood sedate,
Self-governing, wise to wait,
Reverent toward God, he shared to thee, O State !

V.

[Previous to the Dartmouth College case, in 1818, not many important constitutional questions had come before the Supreme Court, and since that time the great lawyer, who then broke upon them with so astonishing a blaze of learning and logic, has exerted a commanding influence in shaping that system of constitutional law—almost a supplementary constitution—which has contributed so much to our happiness and prosperity.—GEORGE S. HILLARD. Dartmouth College, Webster's Alma Mater, had been made the subject of a change in its charter by act of the Legislature of the State of New Hampshire. The College resisted in the courts of the State, and was defeated. Appeal was taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, where the decision was reversed, the inviolability of the charter being fully maintained. By universal consent, it was Webster's argument that assured the result.]

He gladdened in the gladsome light
Of jurisprudence, and that light he made
More gladsome for thy children—such the might
Wherewith the right,
In wrong's despite,
This conquering knight
Bore off in rescue from the field of fight,
Those bloodless jousts of law that drew his dreaded blade.

His Dartmouth—thine, O State, and his—he found
With ills beleaguered round,
Helpless, of crafty foes the purposed prey.

"*The gladsome light of jurisprudence.*"—A phrase of Sir Edward Coke's several times quoted by Webster in his letters.

The lists were set
One famous final day,
And lances met
In tourney, and fair Dartmouth trembling lay,
With scarce a breath,
Dreading her doom, a trouble worse than death.
But lo, a lance
She sees advance,
Sees a fresh lance ride up and plunge into the fray.
To right and left the field gives way,
Nor bides that shock to meet.
He charges to the judges' seat;
Onset of argument,
Volley of precedent,
Tempest of eloquent
Logic and learning blent,
Deluging blows on blows,
He overthrows his foes.
Her foes are overthrown,
Dartmouth will have her own.
Cheer thee, O cherishing mother, in thy son,
His task for thee is done,
Thy battle fought and won.
Beholders, you may go

That have seen this overthrow:
Why do they linger so?
A sight that well might draw
The wonder of the field,
The victor knight they saw,
That steel-clad knight, unclasp his dint-proof shield,
Then—all his mighty heart uncovered there,
His tender mighty heart to view laid bare,
The filial in him to its depths astir—
Go with his heart, as that a buckler were,
Grieved that he could not bring a costlier,
And standing by his mother cover her!
Such passion of great pity strikes an awe
Even into breasts that sit to judge the law.
From the august enthronement where he sate
By MARSHALL'S side, that pillar of the State,

—And standing by his mother cover her!

When he had exhausted the resources of reasoning and logic, his mind passed naturally and simply into a strain of feeling not common to the place. Old recollections and early associations came over him, and the vision of his youth rose up. The genius of the institution where he was nurtured, seemed standing by his side, in weeds of mourning, with a countenance of sorrow. With suffused eyes and faltering voice, he broke into an unpremeditated strain of emotion, so strong and so deep, that all who heard him were borne along with it. Heart answered to heart as he spoke, and when he had ceased, the silence and tears of the impassive bench, as well as the excited audience, were a tribute to the truth and power of the feeling by which he had been inspired.—GEORGE S. HILLARD.

STORY looks down with bland surprise,
The friend's proud gladness beaming in his eyes:
He drops the habitual pen,
Nor takes it up again;
Each weighty word
Before, he duly heard,
But now transfixed he sees the speaker speak,
While Spartan tears roll, one by one, down MARSHALL'S cheek.

Thus then it there befell
That justice prospered well,
And Dartmouth held her right
By the valor of this knight,
And this knight, O State, was he
Whom, with unequal praise, I praise to thee.

—*Story looks down with bland surprise.*

I have often heard my revered and beloved friend, Judge STORY, speak with great animation of the effect he produced upon the Court. "For the first hour," said he, "we listened with perfect astonishment; for the second hour with perfect delight; and for the third hour, with perfect conviction."—GEORGE S. HILLARD.

—*He drops the habitual pen.*

I had observed that Judge Story, at the opening of the case, had prepared himself, pen in hand, as if to take copious minutes. Hour after hour I saw him fixed in the same attitude, but, so far as I could perceive, with not a note on his paper.—Prof. C. A. GOODRICH.

VI.

[JOS. HOPKINSON, ASSOCIATE COUNSEL, TO PRESIDENT BROWN.

DEAR SIR:—I have the pleasure of enclosing you a letter informing you of great matters. Our triumph in the college cause has been complete. Five judges, only six attending, concur not only in a decision in our favor, but in placing it upon principles broad and deep, and which secure corporations of this description from legislative despotism and party violence for the future. The Court goes all lengths with us, and whatever trouble these gentlemen may give us in future, in their great and pious zeal for the interests of learning, they cannot shake those principles which must and will restore Dartmouth College to its true and original owners. I would have an inscription over the door of your building: "Founded by Eleazar Wheelock, Re-founded by Daniel Webster."

I wish you, sir, much happiness and success in promoting the usefulness of the institution, and proving to the world that it has changed hands. Most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WASHINGTON, February 2, 1819. JOS. HOPKINSON.]

Implicit in her cause, O State, the cause
Of many another of thy schools was won,
And large the sequel was
Beyond the sanguine guess of thy sagacious son.
A thousand seats of learning freed
Leapt at that pregnant stroke:
Broken, they said, the intolerable yoke
Meant to subdue us servile to the greed
Of scramblers in the legislative hall—
Each of us there a partisan foot-ball
For rogues to kick and scuffle for at need—

That fatal forming yoke
Smiting he broke,
Once as with flail of oak
Smiting, forever broke.
Henceforth, they sang, O State, thy sacred trusts
Of bountiful bestowment shall retain
Their plighted dedication, to remain,
Inviolable all,
Secure alike from the rapacious lusts
And from the whimsies raw
Of demagogues and tamperers with the law,
Mad with desire of gain
And unchastised of awe.

So sang the choir of colleges aloud
That their rejoicing rang,
And they moreover sang:
Now every use and beauty be endowed
With wealth to make them through long futures live.
No more misgiving stint your giving! Give,
Ye sons and daughters of a noble State:
Pledged are your gifts from fate.
Nor long do answers wait:
In golden streams with emulous haste outpoured,
On every hand

Throughout the land,
From broken coffers flows the escaping hoard.
Science lifts up her voice
In gladness, and rejoice
Letters and Art, and Want and Woe the while
Sweet Pity and Love beguile
To dry their tears, be comforted and smile.
A better alchemy transmuted gold
Backward to blessings manifold ;
And these, O State, thy gains through him, are they
Greatly, whereby thou standest and art strong
And beautiful, O State, this day,
And yet to ages long,
We trust, we pray,
A theme of love and thanks, of eloquence and song.

It is computed that, since Webster made his Dartmouth College argument, the sum of money given in private benefactions to found and endow colleges, schools, libraries, hospitals, and other institutions of public beneficence, has already grown, in this country, to an aggregate of not less than five hundred millions of dollars. All this immense interest is safe under the protection of the constitutional principles, established, against the prepossessions of the Supreme Court itself, by the logic and eloquence of Webster.

VII.

[The Legislature of the State of New York had undertaken to secure to a certain company, for a term of years, the exclusive right of using steam to navigate the Hudson River, together with all the other tide-waters of the commonwealth. This monopoly provoked the Legislature of the State of New Jersey to retaliatory enactments, and serious complications were threatened. In the Supreme Court of the United States, Webster's argument established permanently the doctrine that under the Constitution of the Union the commerce of the whole country was one, and that the jurisdiction of it belonged solely to the general government.]

Thy commerce, too, that bond to bind thee one,
He served at point of need
When a pernicious seed
Planted and fostered in it, had begun,
Struggling towards air and sun,
To promise fruit of brother feud and strife
And menace to thy life.
O State, bethink thee well,
How, woven in words of law
And specious to inspire obedient awe,
A charm of false enchantment fell
Once on that river wide of thy domain,
A sinister spell,
And broadcast sown on all his watery train.
It did not stay the waters in their flow,
The tide's great stress, the current, still were strong ;

But to each cruising keel that clove along
And asked that way to go,
It used its lust to answer yes or no,
And wantonly more often answered no.
From harbor mouth to river head,
From stream to stream and lake to lake,
That evil spell was like to spread,
And thy one web of commerce make
A thousand tatters torn and shred.
Then a wise master of the spell appeared,
To solve its magic bond:
He waved no wizard wand
Reverse, nor counter incantation whispered weird:
Simply the truth he spoke,
With truth the charm of falsehood broke;
Daring thy law above the law invoke,
That young unmeasured might from sleep once more he woke.
Thenceforth, O State, from fountain head to sea
Thy waters all to every keel were free.
'Of many one,'
The motto for thy commerce from thy son;
As one of many thou
Thyself in sequel now
Art, and shalt be, while oceans roll and rivers run.

VIII.

He taught thy court of law to hear
Speech of a strain that there has since been mute,
Clear ethic tone, or Christian, that went near
To charge and change the place's atmosphere,
And give it higher other attribute
Than highest grave juridical dispute.
With wonder and with awe
Men saw
The lawyer leave the law,
Or raise it rather, while with easy ascent
Rising to his sublimer argument
He spoke to listening bench and bar
And reverent popular ear that heard from far,
Of Christ and of Christ's grace
To children, little children, of our race.

And conscience, that dread might within the breast,
How thrice more dreadful made
Seemed it, as he portrayed
The goad inexorable that gave no rest,
No pause, but ever urged and pressed
The sleepless guilty soul, till he confessed.

Of Christ and of Christ's grace.—A passage of Webster's argument in the Girard will case was, with his permission, printed and circulated as a religious tract.

Mute now these high forensic strains,
Long mute, O State, but not their influence spent:
The memory and tradition yet remains
Transmitted, safe among thy glorious gains
Through him, thy son, a force and element
To lawyers for a less unworthy aim,
And spur to spurn ignoble ends with noble shame.

IX.

Nor served thee not that large bucolic life,
So simply lived, and grandly—simply, though
Report and rumor rife
And general gaze that could not gaze its fill
Made it a spectacle and show,
Whereof men pleased themselves with fabling still.
He could not stay or go,
Could not at will
Unbend in casual jest, in manly sport,
But some, for love or thrift, would spread a wide report.
The sun cannot be hid
The heavens amid,
The sun is seen, because he shines,
And the sun shines, because he is the sun,

And, sun-like, WEBSTER's lines
Out into all the earth afar were run.

Such was the man, and so
His private life was public; all he did,
Or said, or was, was known,
And nothing could be hid;
And nothing needed, for his ways were good,
His most unguarded ways, and safely shown.
His noble simple ways
Supplied the speech of men with daily food
For honest praise—
Not idle, since to praise the good and fair
Is to grow like through habit, unaware.
Men liked to hear and tell
How farmer's garb became the great man well:
And everywhere the farmer felt more space,
An ampler air, a franker grace,
Ennoble his vocation, with the thought,
HE is a farmer, WEBSTER so has wrought.
Somewhat more noble they already who
Learn to think nobly of the work they do.
So a diffusive lesson of far reach
Thy WEBSTER taught, not studious to teach,
(As too he pleased, not studious to please)

When but he slipped the customary weight
Of public duty, or the lawyer's toil,
For intervals of ease
Sought in returns to that estate
From which he sprang, swart worker in the soil.

His way in farming all men knew;
Way wide, forecasting, free,
A liberal tilth that made the tiller poor.
That huge Websterian plough what furrows drew!
Through fallows fattened from the barren sea.
Yoked to that plough and matched for mighty size,
What oxen moved!—in progress equal, sure,
Unconscious of resistance, as of force
Not finite, elemental, like his own,
Taking its way with unimpeded course.
He loved to look into their meek brown eyes,
That with a light of love half human shone
Calmly on him from out the ample front,
While, with a kind of mutual, wise,

"*That huge Websterian plough.*"—A very large plough made expressly for Mr. Webster was one of the objects shown at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

"*Through fallows fattened from the barren sea.*"—Mr. Webster fertilized his soil at Marshfield with sea-weed and fish taken from the sea.

"*What oxen moved, in progress equal, sure!*"—The ox was Mr. Webster's particular favorite among domestic animals. He took great pride in possessing fine specimens of the best breeds.

Mute recognition of some kin,
Superior to surprise,
And schooled by immemorial wont,
They seemed to say, We let him in,
He is of us, he is, by natural dower,
One in our brotherhood of great and peaceful power.

So, when he came to die
At Marshfield by the sea,
And now the end is nigh,
Up from the pleasant lea
Move his dumb friends in solemn, slow,
Funereal procession, and before
Their master's door
In melancholy file compassionately go ;
He will be glad to see his trusty friends once more.
Now let him look a look that shall suffice,
Lo, let the dying man
Take all the peace he can
From those large tranquil brows and deep soft eyes.
Rest it will be to him,
Before his eyes grow dim,
To bathe his aged eyes in one deep gaze
Commingled with old days,

"*Up from the pleasant lea.*"—Mr. Webster in his last illness had his oxen driven up for him to view them from his window.

On faces of such friends sincere,
With fondness brought from boyhood, dear.

Farewell, a long look and the last,
And these have turned and passed.
Henceforth he will no more,
As was his wont before,
Step forth from yonder door
To taste the freshness of the early dawn,
The whiteness of the sky,
The whitening stars on high,
The dews yet white that lie
Far spread in pearl upon the glimmering lawn :
Never at evening go,
Sole pacing to and fro,
With musing step and slow,
Beneath the cope of heaven set thick with stars,
Considering by whose hand
Those works, in wisdom planned,
Were fashioned, and still stand

"*To taste the freshness of the early dawn.*"—Mr. Webster was an habitual early riser, and was in the habit of doing a day's work before most people breakfasted. His love of the morning was remarkable.

"*Considering by whose hand.*"—It is related of Mr. Webster that, standing once, on a starry night, under a favorite elm tree on his lawn at Marshfield, he was heard to repeat those sublime verses of the Eighth Psalm, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers," etc.

Serenely fast and fair above these earthly jars.
Never again. Forth he will soon be brought
By neighbors that have loved him, having known,
Plain farmers, with the farmer's natural thought
And feeling, sympathetic to his own.
All in a temperate air, a golden light,
Rich with October, sad with afternoon,
Fitly let him be laid, with rustic rite,
To rest amid the ripened harvest boon.
He loved the ocean's mighty murmur deep,
And this shall lull him through his dreamless sleep.
But those plain men will speak above his head,
This is a lonesome world, and WEBSTER dead!

Be sure, O State, that he,
So great, so simple, wrought for thee,
By only being what he could but be.
But how for thee, with pain and travail dear
He wrought, this yet some space I pray thee further hear.

"*Plain farmers*," etc.—At Mr. Webster's own request he was born to burial by some of the neighboring farmers, his Marshfield neighbors. The funeral occurred in the afternoon of a beautiful October day.

This is a lonesome world, and Webster dead.—Mr. Curtis relates that a plainly dressed man in the funeral concourse was heard to say, as he leaned over the bier, "Daniel Webster, the world without you will seem lonesome."

X.

Plymouth Rock and Bunker Hill fast anchored stand, to stand for aye
Part and parcel of thy mainland, as they stand secure to-day ;
Part and parcel of thy story, wedded one with thee in fate,
These fair names are sealed to glory fadeless as thine own, O State !
But as fast as Rock or Hill is rooted in thine earthy breast,
And as fast as their brave memory clings and clasps thee East and West,
Even so fast, forever blended, braid in braid, and strand with strand,
With them WEBSTER, name and fame, is bound in one unsundered band.
Words are deeds, and in these places words were spoken by thy son,
Dear to memory, dear and deathless, as the deeds that here were done.

O the joy, the exultation, that by him had voice at length,
Then when first the new-born nation guessed the greatness of its strength !
How like ocean to his bases by the breath of tempest stirred,
Did those seas of upturned faces surge beneath his spoken word !

Young he was then, with his country, and he felt the wine of youth
Leap along his bounding pulses in those morning paths of truth.
The exultant young emotion in the multitudinous heart
Of the people that to live for was his chosen patriot part,
Seemed to find in his one bosom room capacious of it all,
Where with flood and ebb like ocean it could heave in rise and fall.

Yet his words of cheer were sober, and he checked and chastened joy,
Teaching us, by heed of duty, in the man to merge the boy.

Then to see him, then to hear him, speaking for his country's cause,
Roused, yet showing that unbounded might unroused within him was,
All the inward man in motion, mind, and heart, and soul, and will,
Meet the outward man to match it and its great desire fulfil—
Height elate, transfigured feature, majesty sublime with grace,
Glorious in the awful beauty of Olympian form and face;
Voice that like the pealing clarion clear above the battle loud
Pierced and thrilled the dinning noises of the mixed tumultuous crowd;
Thought that smote like bolted thunder, passion like the central fires
Underneath the rocked volcano tossing to and fro its spires;
Slow imagination kindling, kindling slow, but flaming vast
Over the wide tract of reason its far-beaming ray to cast;
Single words like stalwart warriors, of those mailed knights of old,
Standing unsupported ready for the champion combat bold;
Words again in serried order, like an irresistible host
Moving as one man in measure, with a tread to shake the coast—
Eloquence rapt into action, action like a god, sublime—
O the life, the light, the splendor, of that flush effulgent prime!

"*Action like a god.*"—Webster's famous description of eloquence will be recalled. His closing words are: "It is action; noble, sublime, godlike action."

XI.

And thine he was, O State, this matchless man;
The statesman still, whether in popular speech
He pleased yet awed the great promiscuous throng
And taught them that grave wisdom intermixed
With memories and with hopes inspiring joy,
Staid joy and wholesome, purged of vain conceit;
Or in discourse statelier and more august,
Decent in his magnificent array,
He stood to speak before the flower and choice
Frequent of all the learning of the land;
Or in the senate, prime among his peers,
Consulting and disputing matters high
Of general concernment; or in turn
A counsellor of presidents, and wise
Head of ambassadors to nations, firm
And prudent opportunely to devise
The equal mutual league, forestalling war,
That knits kin states in peace and amity;
Nay, even in legal argument full oft,

"*Decent in his magnificent array.*—Webster dressed for important public appearances with conspicuous care. He usually wore a coat of blue broadcloth, with gilt buttons, over a buff waistcoat, and also a buff cravat.

Defending private causes, his large thought,
Prompt in presaging heed of consequence,
Engaged him to a circumspection wide
Of what might help or harm the commonwealth:
Ever the statesman—this his statesmanship,
To keep thee whole and one to be a state,—
A state, and not that lamentable doom
A hundred petty fragments of thyself,
Weakling and warring, each the prey of each,
And each and all the prey of foreign states,
Whichever need or greed or chance might tempt
To tamper here with some poor sovereignty,
Belike republic called, the paltry prize
Of liberators and dictators, each
Mad to usurp his turn of brief misrule,
And vex his time the victim of his lust—
An endless line I seem to see them rise,
Of ever worse succession—sequel sad,
Unutterable, burlesque and irony
Of that which was—of that which might have been,
Much more, nay is, or is, we trust, to be,
Since still thou art, O State, and still, though changed,
Art whole and one, survivor of such ills!

That thou art such as now thou art, and not

Forever such as late thou wert too long,
That land foreboded, rent with civil feuds,
Nay, drenched, worse boding, with fraternal blood—
Thank him, thank WEBSTER chief among thy sons,
Thy sons so many noble, chiefly him.
These all loved thee, but he more wisely well,
Foreseeing farther, therefore differently,
And differently devising for thy weal.
Good patriots all alike they were, O State,
And lovers true of Freedom, mete them praise,
Their equal meed, full thanks and reverence due.
Bestow, stint not, they stinted not for thee,
Thou happy mother, rich in generous sons:
To thank their generous sons is thrift for states.
So always WEBSTER taught and practiced; praise
To render, to receive, was his delight,
Such the childlikeness of his rich warm heart.
Late now, but praise him as of yore though late,—
Praise fits this master in the art of praise.
ADAMS and JEFFERSON, in fate and fame

—*Foreseeing farther, therefore differently.*

"No, my friends, I shall not insult the majesty of that intellect with the thought that he believed there was danger to the Union. There was not any danger of a storm; not a single cat's paw in the sky; not a capful of bad weather between Cape Sable and the Lake of the Woods!" —*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

Equalled by that conjunction in their death—
With what majestic eulogy those twain
He fixed as stars of a new Gemini
In the clear upper sky with WASHINGTON,
And with what joy rejoiced and bade rejoice
To hail them there, celestial auspices
Joined to the clustering constellated light
Of the kind heavens above our country bent,
Fresh beams to guide and cheer our walk beneath!
His praise was such that praise from him was fame.
His father's fame, his brother's too, is this,
That DANIEL praised them. How, amid
The jubilant acclamation loud that once
Hailed him in sudden chorus round the world
DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTION, how
Did that affectionate heart to kindred true
Miss from the song the hushed voice of his brother!

—He fixed as stars of a new Gemini.

"Our own firmanent now shines brightly upon our path. Washington is in the clear, upper sky. These other stars have now joined the American constellation; they circle round their center, and the heavens beam with new light. Beneath this illumination let us walk the course of life, and at its close devoutly commend our beloved country, the common parent of all, to the Divine Benignity."—*Webster's Eulogy on Adams and Jefferson.*

—Miss from the song the hushed voice of his brother.

When the land was ringing with praises of the reply to Hayne, Webster said to a friend, "I would rather have a word of approval from my brother Ezekiel than all this."

It was his childlike weakness to love praise,
But love with praise he hungered for like food.

But praise, they say, at last corrupted him
Degenerate from his first simplicity,
Touched him austere with pride and loftiness,
(His very greatness making him less great,)
Hindered those frugal manners which had graced
Such greatness, and as pattern borne fair fruit—
Not so, believe them not, they saw amiss:
Miscalled it pride, his scorn of popular arts;
Hardness miscalled that sad sincerity
Of wisdom weary to have taught in vain;
Miscalled it spendthrift and luxurious sloth,
That open purse, that unconcern to thrive;
Light reck of due, unheeding hand and bond
Miscalled that all-engaging negligence
And habit of improvident delay,
Born of upright intention sure of self,
Joyful good will, and utter trust of friends.
The wronged great, sad, sincere, and simple heart!
Nay, what if he herein had erred indeed,
And those forsooth had gleaned a little flaw
Of less than perfect manly in the man?
Sure, to such public virtue private fault

Not sordid, and so small, might be forgiven!

More to abhor, abhorrent more to truth,
Lies foully fit to that soft social heart
And genial warmth of vital temperament,
The tales they forge of reason, conscience, will—
That reason, and that conscience, and that will!—
Through sensual appetite sold into shame:
Shame that had been a tragedy of shame!
And shame that should, for me, abide not hid,
Full shown, a blot of contrast boldly black
Against the clear large splendor of his fame.

Still, mother State, and though the hideous lie
Were hideous truth, still, I would plead forgive,
Blame, but forgive, nor cast the shadow wide,
Making it one eclipse to darken all.

But pity and forgiveness proudly spare!
Simple and pure, though faultless not, yet pure,
Even to the end thy grave great son remained.
Heed thou them not that bid thee wail him fallen!
No spirit fallen and reprobate and lost,
Inhabiting a body ulcerate
And sapped and foul with sins of sense, the man
Who still in reft old age could overmatch,

Repeating them, those miracles of his prime,
Twice wrought, O State, for thee, and twice postpone
Thine imminent doom; postpone, but not avert
The inevitable! Yet to postpone was much,
And saved thee—from thy fate it could not—through
Thy fate, beyond it, and despite. Full soon
It came, the inexorable hour, and found
Thee ready, not too ready, to receive
The dreadful guest with meet return of grim
Abrupt fierce salutation, eye to eye.

—Who yet in reft old age could overmatch,
Repeating them, those miracles of his prime.

"The effect of Mr. Webster's speech was amazing; at first Northern men abhorred it; next they accepted it."

"He never labored so hard before, and he had been a hard-working man. What speeches he made at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Annapolis! What letters he wrote! His intellect was never so active, nor gave such proofs of Herculean power."—*Parker's Discourse of Daniel Webster.*

XII.

[Well do I recollect the occasion and the scene [the reply to Hayne]. It was truly what Wellington called the battle of Waterloo—a conflict of giants. I passed an hour and a half with Mr. Webster, at his request, the evening before this great effort, and he went over with me, from a very concise brief, the main topics of the speech which he had prepared for the following day. So calm and unimpassioned was the memorandum—so entirely was he at ease himself, that I was tempted to think, absurdly enough, that he was not sufficiently aware of the magnitude of the occasion. But I soon perceived that his calmness was the repose of con-

scious power. He was not only at ease, but sportive and full of anecdote; and, as he told the Senate playfully the next day, he slept soundly that night on the formidable assault of his gallant and accomplished adversary. So the great Condé slept on the eve of the battle of Rocroi; so Alexander slept on the eve of the battle of Arbela; and so they awoke to deeds of immortal fame. As I saw him in the evening (if I may borrow an illustration from his favorite amusement), he was as unconcerned and as free of spirit as some here have often seen him, while floating in his fishing boat along a hazy shore, gently rocking on the tranquil tide, dropping his line here and there, with the varying fortune of the sport. The next morning he was like some mighty admiral, dark and terrible, casting the long shadow of his frowning tiers far over the sea that seemed to sink beneath him; his broad pennant streaming at the main, the stars and stripes at the fore, the mizzen, and the peak, and bearing down like a tempest upon his antagonist with all his canvas strained to the wind and all his thunders roaring from his broadsides."—EDWARD EVERETT.]

O the magnificent firm front of fight,
Sportive and firm, as joyful with the joy
Of youth and strength presaging victory,
Which he that earlier fateful day opposed,
Single, to the whole phalanx of thy foes!
A gallant chieftain led them on, with gay
Audacity, and festive challenge flung,
To tempt the adversary. The august
Repose with which that adversary took
Unmoved the shock of onset haply seemed
To them deceived, insensibility
Or dull capitulation to defeat;
Not what it was, the tranquil rest of power
At ease supping refreshment. Came betimes

Full undeceiving. Roused, at length, self-roused,
He moved and muttered thunder. Musical
And low that prelude, but it boded storm.
Storm lingered and the lovely lightning played
Some space gently and terribly its lithe
And lambent beautiful wild play, while yet,
Lulled in the cavernous bosom of its cloud,
Dreamed the reluctant thunderbolt asleep.
It woke and on the wings of lightning flew,
Legion its name, and all the sky was fire.
Revealed within his lightning, there he stood,
The thunderer stood, and chose from out his store
Of thunder, piled huge tiers, all moulds,
Thunder alive, each bolt, and each awake
Now, and uneasy, eager to be sped.
From these, with leisurely celerity
His missile messengers he chose, and charged
Them to make haste. Already they had flown:
Unhooded, from that dread right hand they flew,
They fled, they fell, falcons of fire, and found
Their quarry slain with terror ere with wound.
At last one farewell long melodious roll
Of boltless thunder mellow with remorse
And pathos for his country, and he ceased:

Clear sky again and cheerful sun in heaven.
Those foes discomfited were thine, O State,
Thine, therefore his, and therefore overthrown.
A fruitful fateful hour it was for thee,
For him glorious, and well with glory crowned.
Yet glory more he merited, and more
Costly to him, nor gainful less to thee,
When after, all the flush of youth retired,
And that unanimous auxiliar hope
And sympathy of his fellows which before
Buoyed him elate upon the billowy breast
Of popularity, a rising tide—
This absent, and proposed to him the dire
Necessity of seeming for a time,
To some pure spirits intense, false to the plight
And promise that he swore with younger lips
To Freedom—yea, and it being moreover dark
And doubtful whether all were not in vain
To do or suffer for a cause foregone—
He yet stood and withstood for thee, O State,
O Union, and for thee forbore his fame:

—O Union, and for thee forbore his fame.

Theodore Parker, a bitterly hostile critic of Webster, has it in his discourse on the statesman's death that—

"On the morning of his fatal speech [that of the seventh of March, 1850, on the Compromise Measures] he told a brother Senator, 'I have my doubts that the speech I am going to make will ruin me.'"

For thee, O Union, stood, nor less for thee,
O Freedom, since thou Freedom wast
By union, and not otherwise, to thrive.
So then this strong vicarious spirit strove,
Not one brief hour of uttermost agony,
Dreadful and swift, but days, and weeks, and months,
Of inexhaustible patience and slow strength,
For us, and greatly stood, until he died
But did not fall. Unfallen he died, nor fell
Dying, nor yet being dead was fallen but stood.
Throughout, and to the end, and on beyond
The end, and endlessly, he stood—and held
These standing both, Union with Liberty,
Inseparably one, upright and safe:
The toiling elements tugged at him in vain.

—*So then this strong vicarious spirit strove*

Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Adams subjoins to a published funeral discourse of his on Webster, a note in which the following words of Webster to some minister (not named) are, on that minister's own authority, given as having been spoken in private intercourse, soon after the delivery of the speech of the seventh of March: "It seemed to me at the time that the country demanded a human victim, and I saw no reason why the victim should not be myself." "Mr. Webster's manner evinced such sincerity and deep patriotic disinterestedness that he [the minister] was moved to tears, which do not cease to start at every recollection of the interview."

XIII.

Fixed, like the pole,
He stood, whatever moved,
As if, though sole,
The shock to take, and break, it him behooved.

The shock he broke;
The multitudinous main
Its waves awoke,
Woke all its waves, and stormed the rock in vain.

To join the waves,
The mustering winds went forth
From all their caves,
Against him, West and East and South and North.

The spinning void
Of whirlwind humming by
In its cycloid,
Paused, on that seated strength its strength to try.

And the floods came:
Deep called to deep aloud
Through the great frame
Of nature, 'twixt the billow and the cloud.

And deluge rolled,
From pole to pole one tide,
Waste as of old,
And weltering shouldered huge against his side.

The thunderbolt,
As when that Titan world
Rose in revolt,
Hot through the kindling air amain was hurled;

And, whence it slept,
Like a swift sword unsheathed,
The lightning leapt,
And round him its fierce arms of flame enwreathed.

The rending throes
Of earthquake, to and fro,
From their repose
Rocked the perpetual hills, or laid them low.

And still he stood—
For the vexed planet still,
Created good,
Was whole, and held her course, and had her will.

—And still he stood—For the vexed planet still—
"No storm not of force to burst the orb can overturn it."—WEBSTER.

Around him cloud,
Pale spectre of spent storm,
Clung, like a shroud,
And veiled awhile the inviolable form.

But umpire Time,
Serenely wise and just,
With slow, sublime,
Unalterable decision and august,

Cleansed this away,
And lo! the glorious front,
In candid day,
Resumed, with solemn joy, its ancient wont.

On the grave face
Pain suffered and subdued
Had worn the trace
Of woman's passion and man's fortitude.

But other years,
In lengthening pilgrim train,
Came, and with tears
Wept out of thankful and remorseful pain,

Touched each deep score
That furrowed cheek or brow,
Forevermore
To majesty become pathetic now.

And men said, See!
This thunder-blasted form,
For you and me
Fain once to take the fury of the storm—

Is it not fair?
Come, cluster round the feet,
Doubt not but there
Still to the mighty heart our praise is sweet.

XIV.

Forgive, O State,
Forgive me, that I dare anticipate
That which shall be;
Clearly I see
Emerge the crescent of his fame from its eclipse:
The dawn is here,
And how shall I refrain my lips
From singing of the sunrise seen so near,
So near, so dear?
He knew eventual wisdom with thee lay,
And, trusting thee with a prophetic trust,
Well brooked to hear the hounds of faction bay
Confusing thee against him to their lust.
He loved thee, State, with self-postponing love:
At length through him at leisure to be just,
Pronounce, I pray,
To-day,
Thy late 'Well done,'
Well won,
Upon thy son,—
Late, but full-voiced and penitent, above
His dust.

XV.

Who boldly had begun, thus softly ceased:
Meek with his joy to deem the dawn increased.

NOTES

NOTES.

To express some present absorbing sentiment of the popular mind and heart, is comparatively an easy task for the poet. Such is, perhaps, the poet's true and proper business. The task here undertaken is different. This is an attempt to revive a sentiment gone far toward being extinguished in the public mind. The attempt will not succeed, and it ought not to, unless the accusations against the uprightness of Webster's character can be shown to be in the main unfounded. With this topic, therefore, it is proposed here to deal first, and to deal frankly and fearlessly. Truth is still dearer than any man's personal fame, and truth is, more than vindication, the object of the present writer. Readers will certainly approve the plan thus indicated of postponing appeal to their genial sympathies, until after their sense of justice shall have been satisfied. For this reason, the display of those sweet and winning qualities in Webster, that distinguished him not less than did his mass and power, will rightly yield precedence to the question, Did the man deserve our love and reverence by his truth and goodness? That he did his country great service, everybody admits. That his confessed great usefulness to his country was heavily deducted from by dereliction at last, many believe, and more suppose. This is an important point for consideration, but not less important, and properly in men's minds prior, is the question, Was this public merit of Webster, whether subject or not to serious deductions, accompanied by personal and private misconduct on his part, such as fairly to cancel our debt of affectionate esteem for his character?

That readers may feel at the start how little is left through ignorance undisclosed, or covered up through fear, the evil things alleged against Webster are here to be presented in the very words of his bitterest accusers. The public fault, that is the great public fault, which, according to his opponents, he committed, was due, they think, to moral infirmity in the man. It will, therefore, not be necessary, as it would be very difficult, to keep separate the public from the private arraignment of his character. The reader is confronted at once with some of the most powerful expressions of opinion and feeling hostile to the good fame of Webster. Some of these are, no doubt, here presented in the only form in which they are now accessible to the public. They are none the less the fountain, though hidden from sight, from which the current of public sentiment as to Webster, originally received its yet unwasted impregnation.

A

The tales they forge of reason, conscience, will—
That reason, and that conscience, and that will!—
Through sensual appetite sold into shame—xi.

In a higher circle of life *professional success* often tempts a young man of aspiring mind to seek to ally himself with those who love not God and care nothing for his cause.

Many years ago a young lawyer, who afterwards became a Senator of the United States, was a member of an obscure church in the mountains of New Hampshire. So long as he remained nestled among the hills he was faithful to the religion of his fathers. But his professional prospects required him to migrate to the metropolis of New England There he found himself in a new world. The faith of his childhood was unpopular Very largely it was the faith of the poor and the middling classes of society. The wealth, the culture, the social rank, the professional prestige of the community, was compacted in almost solid phalanx against it. Prejudice against it ran so high that the churches in which it was preached were branded with opprobrious nicknames. Their worshippers were hustled in the street.

It was a severe temptation to the youthful and brilliant lawyer, who may have felt that he had the making of the first senator of the age in his brain. The necessities of his professional future—yes, of his professional usefulness—seemed to compel him to abandon the old faith of the Pilgrims, and to seek association with the magnates of the bar and the bench by casting in his lot with those who denied Christ. He fell before the temptation. From that time to his death his religious faith, though probably not theoretically changed, was clouded over and practically buried under his professional alliances. His veracity, his honesty, his temperance, his chastity—all were submerged in his intense and overmastering worldliness before he died.—PROFESSOR AUSTIN PHELPS, D. D.

The foregoing allusion to Daniel Webster was first published in a weekly newspaper. The series of papers in the course of which it occurred has since been printed in a volume—the allusion remaining unchanged. The first publication provoked the following notice in a periodical print:

Here is a very grave charge brought against the good name of a dead man. "Webster," Prof. Phelps says, "fell before the temptation." The assertion is unequivocal and unqualified. The "temptation" was to "seek association with the magnates of the bar and the bench by casting in his lot with those who denied Christ."

This must mean that Webster, who had previously been a member of a Trinitarian Congregational Church, joined or, at least, attended a Unitarian Congregational Church when he removed to Boston. "Casting in his lot with those who denied Christ," is a vague phrase; but it can hardly mean anything else than what I have suggested. Mere mingling in social and professional relations with persons not Christian cannot be intended. For there is nothing to show that Webster deliberately chose worse worldly companionship in Boston than he had done in Portsmouth. We are forced, therefore, to conclude that Prof. Phelps means to be understood that Webster, in connecting himself with the Brattle-street church, "cast in his lot with those who denied Christ," *and* that he did this in order to advance his personal fortunes. With the questionable propriety of the severe implication thus conveyed against the Church itself, over which the fervent young Buckminster, of still vivid and beloved memory, had but recently been pastor, let us now have nothing to do. The motive imputed to Webster is our present concern. How does Prof. Phelps know that Webster's *motive* was thus sordid? Is it because there is no other motive supposable? It is true, no doubt, as Prof. Phelps presumes, that Webster was never other than Trinitarian "theoretically." It may be true, too, that Webster did wrong to join the Brattle-street Church. But do these facts, admitted, prove that, in doing so, Webster "deliberately abandoned" his faith, and, *furthermore*, that he abandoned it for the sake of bettering his worldly prospects? Has Webster ever anywhere acknowledged that his motive was what Prof. Phelps alleges it to be? I repeat the question: How does Prof. Phelps know that Webster's motive was such? And if he does not know it, how does he justify the homiletic license under which he unreservedly asserts it to be such?

Now, a pertinent fact or two. First, the memorable controversy between Dr. Worcester for Trinitarianism and Dr. Channing for Unitarianism, which resulted at last in the separation of the two bodies of believers, previously mingled in the same churches, did not *begin* till about the date at which Webster removed to Boston—namely, 1816. Secondly, Webster, at Portsmouth, had been very intimate in the family of the Buckminsters. Buckminster, senior, pastor in Portsmouth, was an ardent Trinitarian, but he went to Boston and preached the sermon for his son's ordination as Unitarian pastor over a church mainly Unitarian—namely, this same Brattle-street Church. This son had been Webster's teacher at Exeter, and, as Webster himself testifies, had been very kind to him there. Thirdly, exchanges of pulpits between Orthodox and Unitarian ministers were common. Fourthly, the two classes of believers were still, with few exceptions, on terms of mutual Christian fellowship, as individuals and as societies. In short, the lines of demarcation had not yet been sharply drawn between orthodox and heterodox. In this state of things, is it not conceivable that Webster was attracted by personal sympathies as much as by selfish ambition in going to Brattle-street? Did Buckminster, senior, "fall before

the temptation" to seek his own worldly advantage in preaching his son's ordination sermon? If not, how is it certain that Webster "fell" before such a "temptation" in joining the congregation to which that son, familiarly known and affectionately regarded by him, had lately ministered? If Prof. Phelps has private information about the interior state of Webster's heart, as to this matter which compels him to his conclusion, against which we feel assured must be the charitable instincts of his nature, let him be just to himself, while remaining severely just to the dead man's memory, and produce his information.

Meanwhile, here is something related by Peter Harvey in his "Reminiscences":

"I said: 'When you [Mr. Webster] came to Boston you went to the Unitarian Church and they now speak of you as a Unitarian.' 'I am not a Unitarian,' he replied. * * * 'When I came to Boston many of my friends went to Brattle-street Church. Buckminster was its minister, one of whose brothers was my preceptor at Exeter. Then the divisions were not so marked as now. Dr. Codman would preach in Brattle-street Church and Dr. Little at the Old South. Afterward the division took place; but I never felt it worth while to change. I was not here a great deal; and at Marshfield I always attended the Orthodox Church, which I continue to do.'"

There are evidently some inaccuracies in this passage. I do not quote it as conclusive historical evidence; but it is probably trustworthy as to the general state of the facts.

I am not now defending Webster. I am adducing an illustration of what seems to me improper homiletic license. I repeat once more: How does Prof. Phelps know what he affirms? It is, observe, a matter of motive; and, in the nature of things, how could he know what he affirms? And if he does not know it, how does he justify himself in using a dead man's reputation for illustrative purposes in this injurious way?

And what shall we say of the homiletic license exemplified in the sweeping sentence of condemnation with which the author of "The Still Hour" brings his reference to Daniel Webster near its close?

"His veracity, his honesty, his temperance, his chastity—all were submerged in his intense and overmastering worldliness before he died."

If this merciless indictment, with its four calmly discriminated counts, is true, how does Prof. Phelps know it is true? And, if he does not know it is true, how does he justify himself in bringing the indictment? In his own sober *judgment*, will the elastic principle of homiletic license stretch wide enough fairly to cover the case?

If Prof. Phelps is right in his facts, then those who knew Webster best must have got their "veracity," too, somehow strangely submerged, for their testimony is very different. How is it? Was Prof. Phelps stating ascertained facts, or practicing homiletic license?

The historical setting which, in a few graphic statements, Prof. Phelps gives to Webster's conduct, besides being out of harmony with contemporaneous accounts, bears inseparable internal evidence of being too freely made up. He says the "poor" and "middling" classes were on one side, and the "wealth," the "culture," the "social rank," the "professional prestige" on the other. He then says that "worshippers" of the former sort were "hustled in the street." This, fairly taken in connection with its context, would seem to imply that wealthy, cultivated, socially distinguished and professionally distinguished Bostonians "hustled" their inferiors "in the street." It certainly suggests a most improbable picture. I trust, at least, that the "magnates of the bar and the bench" did not *often* engage in these reprehensible street demonstrations.

Again, Prof. Phelps says that Webster was "worthy of all the dignities he received, and more." This is said without qualification. But supply the qualification that he was speaking from a "worldly" point of view, and then conceive a homilist declaring a man described by him as having his "veracity," his "honesty," his "temperance," his "chastity," "all" of them "submerged," to be "worthy" of being Senator of the United States, Secretary of State, "and more." "Submerged" is a strong word. When a man's "veracity" is "submerged," what is the man but a "liar?" When a man's "honesty" is "submerged," what is he but a "swindler?" When his "temperance" is "submerged," what is he but a "sot?" When his "chastity," what but a "lecher?" A "liar," a "swindler," a "sot," a "lecher," all co-existing in one and the same individual, and that individual pronounced by a homilist "worthy" of many exalted dignities, "and more!" This assuredly is remarkable, if true. Who says it being considered, it is scarcely less remarkable if false.

Of course, I do not call in question the perfect uprightness of Prof. Phelps's *motive* in thus using his illustrious instance to point his important moral. I simply suppose that he has too easily taken up unwarranted and calumnious rumor as the unquestionable truth of history, and, intent on the moral, been not careful enough concerning the instance.

And now, if the distinguished writer be able to produce demonstration of his allegations against Webster as to *motive* and as to character, then he will at the same time have cleared himself, and have gone far toward converting his critic into a culprit, in place of the censor that he has here very unwillingly undertaken to be. In the very act of warning against homiletic license, I shall appear to have been myself doing something not very unlike practicing homiletic license. With open eyes and with a full sense of the grave responsibility involved, I cheerfully incur my risk.

[A friend has been at the pains to present, in the following brief and effective form, the whole case in accusation and in vindication of Webster's personal character. The accusation, it will be seen, has been made to furnish the vindication. Readers will enjoy the neat manner in which the accuser is displayed performing her unconscious hari-kari.]

MR. WEBSTER'S PURITY—THE ORIGINAL ACCUSATION—THE MOTIVE—AND THE CHARACTER OF THE EVIDENCE.

[Extracts from an article by Mrs. JANE G. SWISSHELM, in the *Independent*, April 11, 1878.]

"In the winter of '49 and '50 I was in Washington, as a correspondent of the New York *Tribune* and the Pittsburg *Saturday Visitor*. Mr. Webster had then made his Marshfield speech, and thrown the whole weight of his influence into the scale against the slave. I, as the advocate of the oppressed, was brought face to face with that influence, AND IT BECAME MY IMPERATIVE DUTY TO MAKE IT AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE.

"I WAS USING MY EYES AND EARS, WATCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES, and hoping for some way by which the unholy alliance of the Webster Whigs and the Slave Power might be brought to naught.

"I SAW NO SPECK OF LIGHT UNTIL one day, in a conversation with Mrs. Southworth on the exceeding depravity of members of Congress, she said: 'Oh! you need not say anything about Southern men. Look at your own Daniel Webster.'

"He was not *my* Daniel Webster; but he was of the North, and among the masses of the people in the Free States WAS REGARDED AS A MODEL OF MORALITY. IN ALL THE ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE OF POLITICAL LIFE, I HAD NEVER HEARD HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER ASSAILED; and the distinct statements which followed that first exclamation WERE SO STARTLING that it was some time before I discerned THEIR PUBLIC IMPORTANCE.

"WHEN I BEGAN TO SEE MY WAY, I went to Joshua R. Giddings, Emanuel Bailey, Dr. Snodgrass, George W. Julian and his wife, and several other persons, for the denial or confirmation of Mrs. Southworth's account, and found that she had only told a small part of the truth.

* * * * * *

"From Maine to Georgia, the Whig press denounced and vilified me, and, by a strange fatality, COPIED MY ARTICLE ENTIRE. There were only about one hundred words in it, but it told the story. * * * In less than three months some one got up a conundrum: 'Why is Daniel Webster like Sisera? Because he was killed by a woman.' This, too, went the rounds of the press; and when the Free Democratic

Party was organized, in Pittsburg, the temporary chairman came down from the platform to be introduced to me, and his first words were, as he warmly grasped my hand: 'I want to take the hand of the woman who killed Daniel Webster.' When the permanent organization of the Convention was effected, Henry Wilson was placed in the chair; and he too left it and came into the audience, to be introduced and congratulate me on having killed Daniel Webster.

"Now, *if my statements had not been true, making them must have crushed me*, [!] and they could not have received *the general endorsement* [!] which came with the sober second thought."

The above—to use its writer's phrase—is not much more than a hundred words, but it tells the story: the whole story: all that could be told in evidence against Mr. Webster's private morals, if a volume were devoted to the subsequent iterations and amplifications of the obscene gossip, which, of itself, had never crept out of its native sewers. Mrs. Swisshelm and her disciples are simply a class of persons who are competent to believe that a long and conspicuous life generally regarded as "a model of morality" could be at the same time so openly and shamelessly profligate as with its filthiness to taint the very breath of rumor, no specific incident or testimony being known or needed! They are those who accept—from motives above confessed, or possibly from motives unconscious—who resolutely accept salacious innuendoes bandied about in circles that never knew the shadow of Daniel Webster, in preference to his actual estimation in that pure and dignified society where he constantly lived and moved throughout his life. That such a preference is natural to multitudes of minds, is the patent explanation of what might otherwise be a great mystery; namely, that the most preposterous calumnies often attain proverbial currency.

But pity and forgiveness proudly spare.

I have known him in private and domestic life. During the last twenty-five years I have received many letters from him, some of which I yet retain, and some have been destroyed at his request. I have had the pleasure of meeting him often in private circles and at the festive board, where some of our sessions were not short; but neither in his letters or his conversation have I ever known him to express an impure thought, an immoral sentiment, or use profane language. Neither in writing nor in conversation have I ever known him to assail any man. No man, in my hearing, was ever slandered or spoken ill of by Daniel Webster. Never in my life have I known a man whose conversation was uniformly so unexceptionable in tone and edifying in character.—HIRAM KETCHUM.

MR. WEBSTER'S TEMPERANCE.

Of all the popular anecdotes which represent Mr. Webster as intoxicated on public occasions, sometimes talking idiotically and sometimes making the most masterly orations under the same alleged influence, there is not one that has not been sifted and refuted, authoritatively and publicly, over and over again, nor one which, for all this, has relaxed in any degree its hold on the perverse popular fancy. The following statements of CHARLES A. STETSON, Esq., the veteran host of the Astor House, are appended to show how such anecdotes have originated. The extracts are from a speech made by Mr. Stetson at a meeting of Mr. Webster's personal friends at the Astor House on the 72d anniversary of his birth. This was but about two years after Mr. Webster's death.

"For seventeen years I had uncommon facilities for seeing Mr. Webster and knowing much about him, and I presume I shall not be charged with vanity when I say that no man spent more hours quietly and socially with him than I did, when he was in New York. I wish to testify, from a constant study of him, against that wretched slander that he was intemperate. I can before my God say that I never saw him intoxicated.

"Mr. Webster was liable to appear at physical disadvantage. As he would, in respite of thought, grow vigorous in manner and action, so would his body cower and grow feeble under mental excitement. To illustrate: He asked me, in 1839, to go with him to Saratoga, where he was expected to make a speech. * * * We arrived at Saratoga and sojourned there several days before the Convention took place. We went upon the staging that had been erected. After being there some five or six minutes the people got up in such numbers that it broke down and we all tumbled to the ground together. The substitute was a long red pedlar-wagon with sloping sides and a top about eight inches wide. Mr. President King, of Columbia College, then connected with the *American*, was upon one end of it and I upon the other. Between us stood Mr. Webster, without proper support for his toes or heels, for two hours and forty minutes, and there he made a speech. It was a great speech, and he exerted himself much to make it. When he had finished I jumped off the wagon and, with the assistance of Dr. Barstow, managed to take him down. He was so weak that he put his knee to the step and fairly *crept* into the carriage. When we all got in he said, 'Well, do you think they will say that I have drunk too much to-day?' 'I shouldn't be much surprised if they did,' I answered; 'I could not hold you up as we came along.' We went immediately to the house and into the parlor. I said to him,

You had better take a little brandy and water.' He would not take any, however. Directly the doctor came along and said he had better take some. Then he took a very little, went and lay down, fell asleep, and after a brief nap awoke perfectly refreshed. Shortly after this I went into the common assembly-room of the hotel, and while passing through the hall I heard a person say, 'What a fine speech! But wasn't he bloody tight!'

"After he had received that mortal wound in Marshfield, by falling out of his wagon, he came on here to make an address before the Historical Society; and there I heard of respectable gentlemen having stated that he was intoxicated. A fouler slander never was uttered by mortal man! I walked down with Mr. Webster over that miserably constructed staircase. He walked as straight as an engineer could, and as true to a line. He was apparently dull and uncomfortable, though expressing himself clearly to me, 'I wish I had not got to go through this.' And, in this mood, he might probably have inclined his head; he might have looked as if he was tired or sleepy, and I should not have been surprised if he was; but he was not drunk, nor under the influence of wine or liquor of any kind.

"He was with us of the New England Society in 1852. He took the whole journey [from Washington] without sleep, and had passed the previous night in preparation, which was hard work for a man nearly seventy years old, and it was not fair to charge him with being tipsy, after he had been busy and riding twenty-four hours without sleep and was so excessively fatigued. He sat with his hand over his eyes, perhaps thinking over what he was about to say. He did not seem to be trying to get up a reputation for being tipsy. He made a speech. Most of us heard it, and it sounded very little like the speech of a drunken man; yet on that occasion I heard more than twenty persons say that he was intoxicated, when I knew that he got up from the table as sober a man as could be in the world."

Question: "How was it at Rochester?"

Mr. STETSON: "I thank you. No better illustration is needed. He went from this house feeble. He was sick during the journey, and unwell when he went to the festival to make a speech. The gentleman who went from the city with him was too modest, and therefore neglected his duty, which was to sit by Mr. Webster and be sure that he alone gave him to drink. Under the excitement of speaking he asked for something to moisten his lips, when whiskey was poured into his tumbler and thence into his stomach. Its effect was instantaneous. On his return I asked him how he enjoyed his visit. He said, 'Admirably. Everything went well, except that some one gave me strong drink while speaking, which excited me very much. I hope there was no bad intention.' He was angry, as well as grieved."

A responsible contributor to the *Independent*, under the heading "The True Story of a Famous Speech," thus disposes of the most notable of the alleged instances of Mr. Webster's inebriety:

The famous speech is that of Daniel Webster, delivered at Rochester, in which he is reported to have proposed to pay the national debt with a silver half-dollar, then and there produced and tendered, and in which, moreover, he is reported, alluding to Genesee Falls, to have declared that no people could be enslaved that had a waterfall a hundred feet high. The popular story is that the great man was, on a certain public occasion, in Rochester, so far under the influence of strong drink as to deliver himself in a strain of maudlin discourse, of which the foregoing passages, here given in substance only, are remembered and representative specimens. Is the popular story the true story?

I, for my part, had seen and heard so many allusions to this speech, so many allusions with circumstance, that I did not doubt but some escapes substantially of that sort were justly attributable to Webster. I easily believed, with the majority, that here was a shameful lapse on his part that could in no way be denied. Not needing to be confirmed in this belief, I yet, while recently a resident of Rochester, encountered casual confirmation, in a way that seemed to leave no opportunity for doubt. A valued personal friend of mine, of high character, with whom I happened to be speaking on a subject naturally suggesting the mention, said to me: "Mr. —— [a distinguished citizen of Rochester, formerly mayor of the city] told me last night that Webster, at a public dinner, actually fell into his arms." The allusion tacitly implied was to the occasion of the traditional remarks of Webster that I began with substantially repeating. Nothing, therefore, could have seemed more final and conclusive. The directness of this testimony was *almost* perfect. There was but a single step of remove from first authority. The honorable ex-mayor had not told me, but he had told a highly esteemed friend of mine. I *did* not question before; but I *could* not question now.

However, being interested in the question of Webster's character, and having by nature and through habit something of the lawyer's sense of the necessity of sifting testimony, I resolved to call on the venerable ex-mayor myself and learn, if I could, the facts in full detail from his own lips. I invited a business man of the city, a gentleman of the highest reputation, whom I knew to be concerned, as I was myself, to learn the unvarnished truth about Webster, to accompany me.

We found the ex-mayor affably ready to satisfy our curiosity. I began, somewhat abruptly, after the matter was introduced: "I heard, Mr. Mayor, that Mr. Webster actually fell into your arms." "So he did," was the prompt reply.

Why question further? Was not the case closed? But I pur-

sued: "Will you be kind enough to relate all the circumstances of the occasion as fully as you can?"

"It was the State Agricultural Fair. Mr. Webster was to be the speaker. He arrived ill; in fact, unable to fulfil his engagement. Mr. Seward took his place. But Mr. Webster rallied, and in the evening a banquet was given in his honor, at which he spoke, delivering, as was presumed, the discourse prepared for the Fair; a splendid speech, at any rate." "Anything maudlin about it, Mr. Mayor?" "Nothing. On the contrary, it was a magnificent piece of oratory." "What were the topics discussed?" "Principally, I think, the tariff question, though there was some allusion, I remember, to state repudiation of debts." "Did Mr. Webster take a half-dollar out of his pocket and propose paying the public debt with it?" The Mayor looked puzzled, but said he remembered nothing of the sort. I mentioned the current story to that effect. The Mayor repeated that he recollected nothing of that nature. "Did Mr. Webster, perhaps, in speaking of the obligation of public debts, use the half-dollar emblematically as a gesture of emphasis?" The Mayor could not say. "Was there at this point anything incoherent in Mr. Webster's speech?" "The farthest from it possible." "What, Mr. Mayor, were your opportunities for observing and hearing?" "I was mayor of the city that year, and so sat next Mr. Webster. General Wadsworth presided, with Mr. Seward on his left and Mr. Webster on his right." "Did Mr. Webster take wine?" "He did. He took wine with his food, and while he was speaking he from time to time sipped it from his glass, General Wadsworth filling the glass and icing the wine." "Did the wine seem to have the effect to cloud his mind or thicken his utterance?" "So far from it, I never heard him speak better in my life, and I heard him often."

"Well, Mr. Mayor, how about his falling into your arms? Tell us about that." "Well, he closed his speech with a beautiful complimentary allusion to Rochester and her fine water-power. He said the Queen of England could boast no such fall of water in all her three kingdoms. No country, he said, need be dependent on a foreign nation for manufactures that possessed such a resource as Genesee Falls, a waterfall a hundred feet high. 'I propose,' Mr. Webster said, 'a sentiment: "The City of Rochester and the Mayor *thereof!*"' [Our genial informant, a fine, erect, venerable figure himself, imitated with admirable effect Mr. Webster's peculiar emphasis and intonation on the word 'thereof' and the gesture, on Mr. Webster's part, that accompanied.] With these words Mr. Webster turned toward me, placed a hand on each shoulder, meanwhile leaning nearly his whole weight on me for an instant, then wheeled round and settled into his seat." "And that was the way in which he fell into your arms?" "That was the way." "That was all?" "That was all." "Then he did not fall drunk?" "Not at all. He was not drunk." "He *took* his seat, did he?" "He

did. The whole action was just a playful gesture of compliment." "So, then, there was nothing in his speech about the impossibility of enslaving a country that had a waterfall of a hundred feet?" "Nothing more than what I told you."

So much for the dialogue of this interview with the Mayor. The occasion described by him was identified in more ways than one, and quite beyond question, with that on which the maudlin remarks traditionally attributed to Webster were reported to have been made.

My friend drew up in writing a report of the interview, covering its material points; and this I soon after read aloud to the Mayor, who, having indicated a few unimportant corrections, which I made on the spot, set his hand to the document, as a faithful representation of what he said. This memorandum, authenticated by the Mayor's autograph, is before me as I write.

It behooves me to add that a few days later we called on another Rochester gentleman of high reputation that was present on this celebrated occasion. This second informant was, he told us, seated at the extreme end of the table (a long one), away from Mr. Webster. He agreed that the speech was a noble one—he thought, never surpassed by Mr. Webster; but he added that at a later hour, after the festivities had proceeded to great length, Mr. Webster was called out a second time, and that then he appeared to him not to be in a condition for speaking. "Did you attribute his disqualification to wine?" "I did." "You know Mr. Webster was ill when he arrived—" "Yes, I was at the station, and they got him on a platform-car to speak; but he said little or nothing, was obviously unfit for the exertion." "Well, he was thus ill; he had then rallied and made this long and exhausting speech; he had sat out a tedious after-dinner round of talk, till twelve or one o'clock at night; now, with his constant habit of going early to bed, with his enfeebled condition at the start, with the prostrating effect of the extraordinary exertion of the evening, the natural nervous reaction having occurred, query, may not his evident incapacity to speak on this second call be accounted for without our attributing it to wine?" "Well, perhaps. I would not certainly say, but I judged it to be due to drink." This distinguished gentleman had no report to make of maudlin remarks uttered on any one of these several occasions by Mr. Webster. All that he witnessed was a slowness and an apparent inability to use his vocal organs on the part of Mr. Webster. This last we know, from unimpeachable testimony, was a constitutional peculiarity of the man from his early years. Often, in attempting to begin a speech, he experienced a kind of paralysis of his vocal organs, that he could not overcome without moistening his mouth.

Light reck of due, unheeding hand and bond—xi.

"To the Editors of the Boston Daily Advertiser:

"In the brilliant essay entitled 'Some Recollections of Rufus Choate,' written by Edwin P. Whipple, Esq., and published in Harper's Half Hour Series, the following extract may be found on the 44th page. Speaking of the friendship between Choate and Webster, the writer says:

'When Webster desired to raise money he sometimes got Choate to indorse his note. When Webster ventured on a daring political move, he got Choate to indorse his policy; and the result was that in either case the indorsement entailed on Choate pecuniary embarrassment or popular obloquy. If one should consult the archives of the Boston Merchants' Bank, there would doubtless appear sufficient reasons why Choate should have been occasionally troubled with a want of money, on account of heedlessly affixing the hieroglyphic which passed for his name on the back of a promise to pay, which bore the more flowing and familiar signature of Daniel Webster.'

"In what is said here of the pecuniary relations of these two great men, bound together by ties of mutual respect and friendship, and of the unfavorable results to Mr. Choate, the friendly essayist has been misinformed. It is believed that Mr. Choate never suffered to the extent of a dollar by indorsing for Mr. Webster. 'The archives of the Merchants' Bank' whould show that he very seldom indorsed for Mr. Webster; not more than two or three times in all, and then for small sums, not exceeding a few hundred dollars. These notes were always promptly paid when due, or before, by Mr. Webster. The 'archives' would also show that Mr. Webster himself always paid careful attention to his notes at the Merchants' Bank, and, if he wanted a note renewed, was as careful and punctilious in making a timely application as any merchant in Boston. Nor were his pecuniary obligations to the bank ever large; nor were there any of them left unpaid to the loss of the bank. It seems proper that these simple facts should be stated in correction of an error which otherwise might come to have the force of an undoubted truth.—B."

["B." is identified, with great probability, by an eminent Bostonian in every way qualified to make the conjecture, as a near relative of Mr. Choate.]

A word about his debts. I had heard again and again that he did not pay. I inquired of Mr. Abbott. Said he, 'Mr. Davis, from my personal knowledge, derived from keeping the private accounts of Mr. Webster, I have some opportunity of knowing. Not a bill which has been presented for two or more years during which I have been with him, but has been promptly paid; and a few days before he died, he called the overseer of his farm, gave him four hundred dollars to pay every man, sent for the minister and paid all that was due him, so it shall not be said Daniel Webster died in debt to any man.' These were the words of his private secretary, and I began to think those who knew Webster best loved him most.—*Rev. Mr. Davis, reporting Mr. Abbott.*

B

Heed thou them not that bid thee wail him fallen—xi.

So fallen ! so lost ! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore !
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore !

Revile him not,—the Tempter hath
A snare for all ;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall !

O, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age
Falls back in night.

Scorn ! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven ?

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains,—
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone ; from those great eyes
The soul has fled ;
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead !

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame ;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame ! WHITTIER.

Not false, as they forswore!
He, who to save the State
The State to please forebore—i.

"'I have my doubts that the speech I am going to make will ruin me.' But he played the card with a heavy, a rash, and not a skillful hand. It was only the playing of a card—his last card. Mr. Calhoun had said, 'The farthest Southerner is nearer to us than the nearest Northern man.' They could trust him with their work—not with its covenanted pay!

"Oh! Cardinal Wolsey! there was never such a fall. 'He fell, like Lucifer, never to hope again.' The telegraph which brought him tidings of his fate was a thunder-stroke out of the clear sky. No wonder that he wept, and said, 'I am a disgraced man, a ruined man!' His early, his last, his fondest dream of ambition broke, and only ruin filled his hand! What a spectacle to move pity in the stones of the street!

"But it seemed as if nothing could be spared him. His cup of bitterness, already full, was made to run over; for joyous men, full of wine and the nomination, called him up at midnight out of his bed—the poor, disappointed old man!—to 'congratulate him on the nomination of Scott!' And they forced the great man, falling back on his self-respect, to say that the next morning he should 'rise with the lark, as jocund and as gay.' Was not that enough? Oh, is there no pity in the hearts of men? Even that was not enough! Northern friends went to him, and asked him to advise men to vote for General Scott. General Scott is said to be an anti-slavery man; but as soon as the political carpenters put the 'planks' together at Baltimore, he scrambled upon the platform, and stands there on all-fours to this day, looking for 'fellow-citizens, native and adopted,' listening for 'that brogue,' and declaring that, after all, he is 'only a common man.' Did you ever read General Scott's speeches? Then think of asking Daniel Webster to recommend him for President—Scott in the chair, and Webster out! That was gall after wormwood. They say Webster did write a letter advocating the election of Scott, and afterwards said, 'I still live.' If he did so, attribute it to the wanderings of a great mind, shattered by sickness; and be assured he would have taken it back, if he had ever set his firm foot on the ground again! Daniel Webster went down to Marshfield—to die! He died of his 7th of March speech! That word endorsed on Mason's Bill drove thousands of fugitives from America to Canada. It put chains round our court-house; it led men to violate the majesty of law all over the North. I violated it, and so did you. It sent Thomas Sims in fetters to his jail and his scourging at Savannah; it caused practical atheism to be preached in many churches of New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and worst of all, Boston itself. And then, with its own recoil, it sent Daniel Webster to his grave, giving him such a reputation as a man would not wish for his utterest foe. No event in the American Revolution was half so terrible as his speeches in defense of slavery and kidnapping, his abrogation of the right to discuss

all measures of the Government. We lost battles again and again, lost campaigns—but our honor we never lost. The army was without powder at Cambridge in '76, without shoes and blankets in '78; and the bare feet of New England valor marked the ice with blood when they crossed the Delaware. But we were never without conscience, never without morality. Powder might fail, and shoes might drop, old and rotten, from the soldiers' feet; but the love of God was in the American heart, and no American general said, 'There is no law higher than Blue Ridge.' Nay, they appealed to God's higher law, not thinking that in politics religion makes men mad. While the Philip of slavery was thundering at our gate, the American Demosthenes advised us to 'conquer our prejudices' against letting him in; to throw down the wall 'with alacrity,' and bid him come: it was a constitutional Philip. How silver dims the edge of steel! When the tongue of freedom was cut out of the mouth of Europe by the sabres of tyrants, and only in the British Isles and in Saxon speech could liberty be said or sung, the greatest orator who ever spoke the language of Milton and Burke told us to suppress discussion! In the dark and troubled night of American politics, our tallest Pharos on the shore hung out a false beacon. Said Mr. Webster once, 'There will always be some perverse minds who will vote the wrong way, let the justice of the case be ever so apparent.' Did he know what he was doing? Too well. In the winter of 1850, he partially prepared a speech in defense of freedom. Was his own amendment to Mason's Bill designed to be its text? Some say so. I know not. He wrote to an intimate and sagacious friend in Boston, asking, 'How far can I go in the defence of freedom and have Massachusetts sustain me?' The friend repaid the confidence, and said, 'Far as you like.' Mr. Webster went as far as New Orleans, as far as Texas and the Del Norte, in support of slavery. When that speech came—the rawest wind of March—the friend declared: 'It seldom happens to any man to be able to disgrace the generation he is born in; but the opportunity has presented itself to Mr. Webster, and he has done the deed.' Cardinal Wolsey fell, and lost nothing but his place. Bacon fell; but the 'wisest, brightest,' lived long enough to prove himself the 'meanest of mankind.' Strafford came down; but it was nothing to the fall of Webster. The Anglo-Saxon race never knew such a terrible and calamitous ruin. His downfall shook the continent. Truth fell prostrate in the street. Since then, the court-house has a twist in its walls, and equity cannot enter its door; the steeples point awry, and the 'higher law' is hurled down from the pulpit. One priest would enslave all the 'posterity of Ham,' and another would drive a fugitive from his own door; a third is certain that Paul was a kidnapper, and a fourth has the assurance of his consciousness that Christ Jesus would have sold and bought slaves. Practical atheism became common in the pulpits of America; they forgot that there was a God. In the hard winter of 1780, if Fayette had copied Arnold, and Washington gone over to the enemy, the fall could not have been worse.

Benedict Arnold fell, but fell through—so low that no man quoted him for precedent. Aaron Burr is only a warning. Webster fell, and he lay there 'not less than archangel ruined,' and enticed the nation in his fall. Shame on us! All those three are of New England blood!"—*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

He loved thee, State, with self-postponing love—XIV.

"Here is the reason. He wanted to be President. That was all of it. Before this he had intrigued—always in a clumsy sort, for he was organized for honesty, and cunning never throve in his keeping—had stormed, and blustered, and bullied. 'General Taylor the second choice of Massachusetts for the President!' quoth he. 'I tell you I am to be the first, and Massachusetts has no second choice.' Mr. Clay must not be nominated in '44; in '48 General Taylor's was a 'nomination not fit to be made.' He wanted the office himself. This time he must storm the North, and conciliate the South. This was his bid for the Presidency—fifty thousand square miles of territory and ten millions of dollars to Texas; four new slave States; slavery in Utah and New Mexico; the Fugitive Slave Bill, and two hundred millions of dollars offered to Virginia to carry free men of color to Africa.

These all loved thee, but he more wisely well,
Foreseeing farther, therefore differently—XI.

"What was the design of all this? It was to 'save the Union.' Such was the cry. Was the Union in danger? There were a few non-resistants at the North, who said, 'We will have "no union with slave-holders."' There was a party of seceders at the South, who periodically blustered about disunion. Could these men bring the Union into peril? Did Daniel Webster think so? I shall never insult that giant intellect by the thought. He knew South Carolina, he knew Georgia, very well. Mr. Benton knew of no 'distress,' even at the time when it was alleged that the nation was bleeding at 'five gaping wounds,' so that it would take the whole omnibus full of compromisers to staunch the blood. 'All the political distress is among the politicians.' I think Mr. Webster knew there was no danger of a dissolution of the Union. But here is a proof that he knew it. In 1850, on the 22d of December, he declared, 'There is no longer imminent danger of the dissolution of the United States. We shall live, and not die.' But soon after, he went about saving the Union again and again and again—saved it at Buffalo, Albany, Syracuse, at Annapolis, and then at Capon Springs."—*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

No spirit fallen and reprobate and lost,
Who still in reft old age could overmatch,
Repeating them, those miracles of his prime—
Twice wrought, O State, for thee—and twice postpone
Thine imminent doom—xi.

"He never labored so before, and he had been a hard-working man. What speeches he made at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Annapolis! What letters he wrote! His intellect was never so active, nor gave such proofs of Herculean power. The hottest headed Carolinian did not put his feet faster or farther on in the support of slavery. He

'Stood up the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought 'gainst Heaven, now fiercer by despair.'

Mr. Webster stamped his foot, and broke through into the great hollow of practical atheism, which undergulfs the State and Church. Then what a caving in was there! The firm-set base of northern cities quaked and yawned with gaping rents. 'Penn's sandy foundation' shook again, and black men fled from the city of brotherly love, as doves flee from a farmer's barn when summer lightning stabs the roof. There was a twist in Faneuil Hall, and the doors could not open wide enough for Liberty to regain her ancient cradle; only soldiers, greedy to steal a man, themselves stole out and in. Ecclesiastic quick-sand ran down the hole amain. Metropolitan churches toppled, and pitched, and canted, and cracked, their bowing walls all out of plumb. Colleges, broken from the chain which held them in the stream of time, rushed into the abysmal rent. Harvard led the way, *Christo et Ecclesiæ* in its hand. Down plunged Andover, 'Conscience and the Constitution' clutched in its ancient, failing arm. New Haven began to cave in. Doctors of Divinity, orthodox, heterodox with only a doxy of doubt, 'no settled opinion,' had great alacrity in sinking, and went down quick, as live as ever, into the pit of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the bottomless pit of lower law—one with his mother, cloaked by a surplice, hid 'neath his sinister arm, and an acknowledged brother grasped by his remaining limb!"—*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

His forty years of great example too, etc., p. 5.—The strength for union and for safety to the country which Webster exerted by simply being the man that he was, was strikingly, if somewhat whimsically, expressed by N. P. Willis, in that peculiar rhetoric of which, in his prose, that too soon neglected genius was the master:

* * "the Mississippi-ment of the public mind by the great Daniel—he and that river being the only streams that channel the continent from end to end with one headway of union."

WEBSTER AT 19 TO JAMES HERVEY BINGHAM.

"But, Hervey, our prospect darkens; clouds hang around us. Not that I fear the menaces of France; not that I should fear all the powers of Europe leagued together for our destruction. No, Bingham, intestine feuds alone I fear. The French faction, though quelled, is not eradicated. The Southern States in commotion, a Democrat the head of the executive in Virginia; a whole county in arms against the government of McKean in Pennsylvania; Washington, the great political cement, dead, and Adams almost worn down with years and the weight of cares. These considerations, operating on a mind naturally timorous, excite unpleasant emotions. In my melancholy moments, I presage the most dire calamities. I already see, in my imagination, the time when the banner of civil war shall be unfurled; when Discord's hydra form shall set up her hideous yell, and from her hundred mouths shall howl destruction through our empire; and when American blood shall be made to flow in rivers by American swords! But propitious Heaven prevent such dreadful calamities! Internally secure, we have nothing to fear."

His forty years of great example, too,
Staunchly, in all men's view
To its own promise true—iv.

"On Boston Common, in July, 1852, just before his death, when he stood in the face of Boston people, whom he had served for thirty years, he used these words: 'My manner of political life is known to you all. I leave it to my country, to posterity, and to the world to see whether it will or will not stand the test of time and truth.' Twenty-five years of our history have shed a flood of light upon the past, and emblazoned anew the records of Mr. Webster's public life. I shall not rehearse them, but I say this to you, and I challenge contradiction, that from the beginning to the end that record is true to the great principles that presided over the birth of the Nation, and found voice in the Declaration of Independence; that were wrought into the very fabric of the Constitution; that carried us, with unmutilated territory, and undefiled Constitution, and unbroken authority of the Government, through the sacrifices and the terrors and the woes of civil war; that will sustain us through all the heats and agues which attend the steps of the Nation to perfect health and strength."

—WILLIAM M. EVARTS.

He knew eventual wisdom with thee lay—xiv.

"In the course of it [a reported conversation] he spoke [it was the last sorrow of his life] of some recent misrepresentation of his views and purposes with respect to some public matters, and added that he should take no pains to set the parties right, but they would in due time find out their mistake, and then he hoped they would set themselves right."—*A letter to the N. Y. Times.*

The toiling elements tugged at him in vain—xii.

"The strong tendency of generous sentiment, when not restrained by prudence, to override the prescriptive rights secured by constitutions and compacts, the great statesman and guide of men must sternly resist, even if resistance expose him to slander and vituperation, to the distrust of former friends, to the misunderstanding of his motives, to the charge of being a traitor to principles which his whole life has pledged him to uphold. A vindictive philanthropy, here and there, and from time to time, reopens the flood-gates of slander in the vain hope of disturbing the great statesman's repose. The firm earth does not stand with more unshaken firmness against the raving sea, as it roars and beats upon his Marshfield beach, than he stands unmoved in the magnanimity of his character, and the upholding power of conscious rectitude, looking down upon the ignominious efforts of foiled enemies to undermine the grandeur of his position."—*Boston Courier*, Oct. 20, 1852.

And taught them that grave wisdom—xi.

"He addressed himself, therefore, assiduously, and almost alone, to what seemed to him the duty of calling the American people back from revolutionary theories to the formation of habits of peace, order and submission to authority. He inculcated the duty of submission by States and citizens to all laws passed within the province of constitutional authority, and of absolute reliance on constitutional remedies for the correction of all errors and the redress of all injustice. This was the political gospel of Daniel Webster. He preached it in season and out of season, boldly, constantly, with the zeal of an apostle, and with the devotion, if there were need, of a martyr. It was full of saving influences while he lived, and those influences will last so long as the Constitution and the Union shall endure."—WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

Of the people that to live for was his chosen patriot part—x.

"He served the State, and labored for and loved it from boyhood up. He withheld no service, he shrank from no labor, he drew no nice distinctions as to opportunities or occasions. Whenever a word was to be spoken, and could be usefully spoken, to the American people, in the lecture room, on the anniversary occasions, in the public assemblies, in the cities and in the country, on excursions and progresses through large stretches of our territory, North and South, East and West, always on an elevated stage, and in a conspicuous cause, he gave his great powers to this service of the people.

"What could exceed the breadth and generosity of his views, the comprehensiveness, the nationality, of his relations to the people! Born in the Northeastern corner of New England, the Northeastern corner of the country, seated for the practice of his profession and for his domestic life in the city of Boston, on the very outside rim of our country's terri-

tory,—I defy any one to find, from the moment he left his provincial college at Dartmouth, to the time he was buried on the shore of Marshfield, a time when that great heart did not beat, and that great intellect did not work for the service equally of all the American people, North and South, East and West. We do not find all the great men of this country thus large and liberal in the comprehension of their public spirit, thus constant and warm in the exercise of patriotic feeling. I cannot even allude to the immense and frequent public services that Mr. Webster performed; but I have this to say, that I would rather that the men and youth of this country should read the peroration of Mr. Webster's speech in reply to Hayne, and the peroration of his speech for the country and its peace on the 7th of March, 1850, than any equal passages in all the text-books and all the oratory of our politics from the time he died until now. I would like to have anybody that has been instructed by the last twenty-five years see if he could portray the evils, the weaknesses, the woes of nullification under the Constitution, the wretchedness and the falsity of the claims and schemes of peaceful secession, better than Webster could do and did do in advance. I would like to see one touch of art, one word of eloquence, one proof or reason that can be added under this stern teaching of a quarter of a century, that is not found in those great speeches now. His countrymen questioned him, his countrymen maligned him; but it was his country that he loved, and he would not curse it for anybody's cursing him.—WILLIAM M. EVARTS.

To join the waves,
The mustering winds went forth—xiii.

"Mr. President: I wish to speak to-day, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American, and a member of the Senate of the United States. It is fortunate that there is a Senate of the United States; a body not yet moved from its propriety, not lost to a just sense of its own dignity and its own high responsibilities, and a body to which the country looks, with confidence, for wise, moderate, patriotic, and healing counsels. It is not to be denied that we live in the midst of strong agitations, and are surrounded by very considerable dangers to our institutions of government. The imprisoned winds are let loose. The East, the West, the North, and the stormy South all combine to throw the whole ocean into commotion, to toss its billows to the skies, and disclose its profoundest depths. I do not affect to regard myself, Mr. President, as holding, or as fit to hold, the helm in this combat of the political elements; but I have a duty to perform, and I mean to perform it with fidelity—not without a sense of surrounding dangers, but not without hope. I have a part to act, not for my own security or safety, for I am looking out for no fragment upon which to float away from the wreck, if wreck there must be, but for the good of the whole, and the preservation of the whole; and there is that which will keep me to my duty during this struggle, whether the sun and the stars shall appear, or shall not appear, for

many days. I speak to-day for the preservation of the Union. 'Hear me for my cause.' I speak to-day, out of a solicitous and anxious heart, for the restoration to the country of that quiet and that harmony which make the blessings of this Union so rich and so dear to us all."—*Webster's Speech in the Senate*, March 7, 1850.

By Marshall's side, that pillar of the State—v.

"If I were to name two men whose services were incomparably above those of all others in making this new experiment of free government and of paper constitutions a living power to a great and strenuous nation—two that could not have been spared though all others remained—I should say that to the great Chief Justice Marshall, and to the great forensic, popular, parliamentary defender and expounder of the Constitution, Daniel Webster, we most owe what we now enjoy."WM. M. EVARTS.

That saving sense of bond to duty—iv.

"It is indeed true, as we have always agreed, that all who swear to support the Constitution are bound not only to submit to the return of fugitive slaves but to aid in it, if necessary. All honor to Mr. Webster's consistency on this point."—*Wendell Phillips' Review of Webster's 7th of March speech*, Am. A. S. Soc., 1850.

To thank their generous sons is thrift for states.—xi.

"If Mr. Webster's reasoning cannot be answered (and this is somewhat of a hard task), he must in some other way be put down. * * * The real truth seems to be, that we are acting over again the scenes of old Athens, in the days of Aristides. His rival, Themistocles, went about the whole city whispering all manner of surmises against him, so that at length the populace were ready to thrust out the best and most distinguished man in their commonwealth. On the day when the votes of Athens were to decide the fate of Aristides, he asked one of the citizens on his way to the voting hall, to whom he was personally unknown, how he was going to vote. He told him that he should vote to banish Aristides. 'Why?' said he, 'what has he done?' 'Why, nothing,' replied the simple clown, 'that I know of; but I am tired of hearing everybody call him the *Just*.' So is it, I fear, among us at the present moment. The man who has commanded more listening ears, and made more hearts beat high, these twenty years past than any other man in our great community, is called upon by the spirit of the levellers to come down to their humbler place, and take his lot with them. '*A bas le Sénateur!* There are other men who have as good a right to reign as you; and if we cannot bring you to a level by argument, we can do it by contumely and vituperation.' This is the brief, but, I am pained to say that I feel constrained to believe, the true history of the matter."—MOSES STUART.

Thy late 'Well done'—xiv.

"Let those who are doing such deeds of violence against fact and truth, call to mind, that Athens, when she had banished her Aristides for six years, felt obliged to recall him before the end of that period, and to give him her highest confidence and her posts of highest honor. Let them call to mind, that when the immortal Æschylus, in one of his lofty and glowing tragedies, introduced a sentence replete with eulogy of moral goodness and integrity, every eye, in the assemblage of those very Athenians who once voted for his banishment, was filled with tears of emotion, and was spontaneously fixed upon Aristides, who was then present. And so will it be with us, if the impetuous zeal of the present hour is to march forward until it gains its ultimate end. We are full surely preparing for a future repentance."

"And is Mr. Webster to be maligned and vituperated, and thrust out of the confidence of his fellow citizens, because he will not vote to violate solemn compacts? If this must be done, such a day awaits this nation as no politician has yet imagined, and no prophet yet foretold. I will never believe that such a day is coming upon the State in which are to be found Faneuil Hall, and Bunker Hill, and Concord, and Lexington, and the descendants of the men who immortalized themselves there. If such a day must dawn on us, for one I would say, rather than gaze upon it: 'Hung be the heavens with black!' Patriotism, integrity, firmness, sound judgment, lofty, soul-thrilling eloquence, may thenceforth despair of finding their reward among us."

"One word more concerning Mr. Webster, and then I have done. Suppose the violence of the present time succeeds in withdrawing the public confidence from him, and he retires from office and from public life. Suppose even the worst his enemies can wish him should come upon him, and he should go into the shades of retirement, and live and die there, unnoticed (if this be possible) and as it were unknown. The contest goes on, the country is involved in bitter and bloody war, and still his counsel is rejected and despised. But he soon leaves this earthly stage of action and of contest, and is gathered to his fathers, it may be without a monument or eulogy to preserve his name. If all this can be supposed, and should actually take place; what then? Can the memory of such a man perish? No; posterity, divested of partisan feeling and prejudice, will erect to him a lofty monument, which will be inscribed on one façade with these most significant words:

'Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida.'

"On another façade, under his simple name, will be carved in high relief:

"O NOSTRUM ET DECUS ET COLUMEN!"

—Moses Stuart.

C

"His Dartmouth—thine and his—O State, he found"—v.

Acts of the Legislature had invaded the charter of Dartmouth College. "A suit was brought to test their validity. It was tried in the Supreme Court of the State; a judgment was given against the College, and this was appealed to the Supreme Federal Court by writ of error. Upon solemn argument, the charter was decided to be a contract whose obligation a State may not impair; the acts were decided to be invalid as an attempt to impair it, and you hold your charter under that decision to-day. How much Mr. Webster contributed to that result, how much the effort advanced his own distinction at the bar, you all know. Well, as if of yesterday, I remember how it was written home from Washington that 'Mr. Webster closed a legal argument of great power by a peroration which charmed and melted his audience.' Often since, I have heard vague accounts, not much more satisfactory, of the speech and the scene. I was aware that the report of his argument, as it was published, did not contain the actual peroration, and I supposed it lost forever. By the great kindness of a learned and excellent person, Dr. Chauncy A. Goodrich, a professor in Yale College, with whom I had not the honor of acquaintance, although his virtues, accomplishments, and most useful life were well known to me, I can read to you the words whose power, when those lips spoke them, so many owned, although they could not repeat them.

As those lips spoke them, we shall hear them nevermore, but no utterance can extinguish their simple, sweet, and perfect beauty. Let me first bring the general scene before you, and then you will hear the rest in Mr. Goodrich's description. It was in 1818, in the thirty-seventh year of Mr. Webster's age. It was addressed to a tribunal, presided over by Marshall, assisted by Washington, Livingston, Johnson, Story, Todd, and Duvall—a tribunal unsurpassed on earth in all that gives illustration to a bench of law, and sustained and venerated by a noble bar. He had called to his aid the ripe and beautiful culture of Hopkinson; and of his opponents was William Wirt, then and ever of the leaders of the bar, who, with faculties and accomplishments fitting him to adorn and guide public life, abounding in deep professional learning, and in the most various and elegant acquisitions—a ripe and splendid orator, made so by genius and the most assiduous culture—consecrated all to the service of the law. It was before that tribunal, and in the presence of an audience select and critical, among whom, it is to be borne in mind, were some graduates of the college, who were attending to assist against her, that he opened the cause. I gladly proceed in the words of Mr. Goodrich: "Before going to Washington, which I did chiefly for the sake of hearing Mr. Webster, I was told that, in arguing the case at Exeter, he had left the whole court-room in tears at the conclusion of his speech. This, I confess, struck me unpleasantly—any attempt at pathos on a purely legal question like this seemed hardly in good taste. On my way to Washington

I made the acquaintance of Mr. Webster. We were together for several days in Philadelphia, at the house of a common friend; and as the College question was one of deep interest to literary men, we conversed often and largely on the subject. As he dwelt upon the leading points of the case, in terms so calm, simple, and precise, I said to myself more than once, in reference to the story I had heard, 'Whatever may have seemed appropriate in defending the College at *home*, and on his own ground, there will be no appeal to the feelings of Judge Marshall and his associates at Washington.' The Supreme Court of the United States held its session, that winter, in a mean apartment of moderate size—the Capitol not having been built after its destruction in 1814. The audience, when the case came on, was therefore small, consisting chiefly of legal men, the *élite* of the profession throughout the country. Mr. Webster entered upon his argument in the calm tone of easy and dignified conversation. His matter was so completely at his command that he scarcely looked at his brief, but went on for more than four hours with a statement so luminous and a chain of reasoning so easy to be understood, and yet approaching so nearly to absolute demonstration, that he seemed to carry with him every man of his audience without the slightest effort or weariness on either side. It was hardly *eloquence*, in the strict sense of the term; it was pure reason. Now and then, for a sentence or two, his eye flashed and his voice swelled into a bolder note, as he uttered some emphatic thought; but he instantly fell back into the tone of earnest conversation, which ran throughout the great body of his speech.

'A single circumstance will show you the clearness and absorbing power of his argument. I had observed that Judge Story, at the opening of the case, had prepared himself, pen in hand, as if to take copious minutes. Hour after hour I saw him fixed in the same attitude, but, so far as I could perceive, with not a note on his paper. The argument closed, and I *could not discover that he had taken a single note.* Others around me remarked the same thing; and it was among the *on dits* of Washington, that a friend spoke to him of the fact with surprise, when the Judge remarked: '"Everything was so clear, and so easy to remember, that not a note seemed necessary, and, in fact, I thought little or nothing about my notes."'

'The argument ended. Mr. Webster stood for some moments silent before the Court, while every eye was fixed intently upon him. At length, addressing the Chief Justice, Marshall, he proceeded thus:

'"*This, Sir, is my case!* It is the case, not merely of that humble institution, it is the case of every College in our land. It is more. It is the case of every Eleemosynary Institution throughout our country; of all those great charities founded by the piety of our ancestors to alleviate human misery, and scatter blessings along the pathway of life. It is more! It is, in some sense, the case of every man among us who has property of which he may be stripped; for the question is simply this: Shall our State

Legislatures be allowed to take that which is not their own, to turn it from its original use, and apply it to such ends or purposes as they, in their discretion, shall see fit?

'"Sir, you may destroy this little institution; it is weak; it is in your hands! I know it is one of the lesser lights in the literary horizon of our country. You may put it out. But if you do so, you must carry through your work! You must extinguish, one after another, all those great lights of science which, for more than a century, have thrown their radiance over our land!

'"It is, Sir, as I have said, a small College. And yet, *there are those who love it*—"

'Here the feelings which he had thus far succeeded in keeping down broke forth. His lips quivered; his firm cheeks trembled with emotion; his eyes were filled with tears, his voice choked, and he seemed struggling to the utmost simply to gain that mastery over himself which might save him from an unmanly burst of feeling. I will not attempt to give you the few broken words of tenderness in which he went on to speak of his attachment to the College. The whole seemed to be mingled throughout with the recollections of father, mother, brother, and all the trials and privations through which he had made his way into life. Every one saw that it was wholly unpremeditated, a pressure on his heart, which sought relief in words and tears.

'The court-room, during these two or three minutes, presented an extraordinary spectacle. Chief Justice Marshall, with his tall, gaunt figure bent over as if to catch the slightest whisper, the deep furrows of his cheeks expanded with emotion, and eyes suffused with tears; Mr. Justice Washington at his side, with his small and emaciated frame, and countenance more like marble than I ever saw on any other human being, leaning forward with an eager, troubled look; and the remainder of the Court, at the two extremities, pressing, as it were, toward a single point, while the audience below were wrapping themselves round in closer folds beneath the bench to catch each look, and every movement of the speaker's face. If a painter could give us the scene on canvass—those forms and countenances, and Daniel Webster as he then stood in the midst, it would be one of the most touching pictures in the history of eloquence. One thing it taught me, that the *pathetic* depends not merely on the words uttered, but still more on the estimate we put upon him who utters them. There was not one among the strong-minded men of that assembly who could think it unmanly to weep, when he saw standing before him the man who had made such an argument, melted into the tenderness of a child.

'Mr. Webster had now recovered his composure, and fixing his keen eye on the Chief Justice, said, in that deep tone with which he sometimes thrilled the heart of an audience:

'"Sir, I know not how others may feel" (glancing at the opponents of the College before him), "but, for myself, when I see my Alma Mater

surrounded, like Cæsar in the Senate-house, by those who are reiterating stab upon stab, I would not, for this right hand, have her turn to me and say, *Et tu quoque, mi fili!* And thou too, my son!"

'He sat down. There was a death-like stillness throughout the room for some moments; every one seemed to be slowly recovering himself, and coming gradually back to his ordinary range of thought and feeling.'"—*Choate's eulogy on Webster, delivered at Dartmouth College.*

Then a wise master of the spell appeared—vii.

"In the spring of 1824, Mr. Webster was much concerned in the discussion then going on in the House of Representatives at Washington, upon the tariff. One morning he rose very early—earlier even than was his custom—to prepare himself to speak upon it. From long before daylight till the hour when the House met he was busy with his brief. When he was far advanced in speaking a note was brought to him from the Supreme Court, informing him that the great case of Gibbons vs. Ogden would be called on for argument the next morning. He was astounded at the intelligence, for he had supposed that after the tariff question should have been disposed of, he would still have ten days to prepare himself for this formidable conflict, in which the constitutionality of the laws of New York, granting a steamboat monopoly of its tide-waters, would be decided. He brought his speech on the tariff to a conclusion as speedily as he could, and hurried home to make such preparation for the great law argument as the shortness of the notice would permit. He had then taken no food since his morning's breakfast—but instead of dining he took a moderate dose of medicine and went to bed, and to sleep. At ten P. M. he awoke, called for a bowl of tea, and without other refreshment went immediately to work. To use his own phrase, 'the tapes had not been off the papers for more than a year.' He worked all night, and, as he has told me more than once, he thought he never on any occasion had so completely the free use of all his faculties. He hardly felt that he had bodily organs, so entirely had his fasting and the medicine done their work. At nine A. M., after eleven hours of continuous intellectual effort, his brief was completed. He sent for the barber and was shaved; he took a very slight breakfast of tea and crackers; he looked over his papers to see that they were all in order, and tied them up; he read the morning journals, to amuse and change his thoughts, and then he went into court, and made that grand argument which, as Judge Wayne said above twenty years afterward, 'released every creek and river, every lake and harbor in our country, from the interference of monopolies.' Whatever he may have thought of his powers on the preceding night, the court and the bar acknowledged their whole force that day. And yet, at the end of five hours, when he ceased speaking, he could hardly be said to have taken what would amount to half the refreshment of a common meal for above two and thirty hours, and, out of the thirty-six hours immediately preceding, he had for thirty-one been in a state of very high intellectual excitement and activity."—*George Ticknor's Reminiscences.*

—— a force and element
To lawyers, for a less unworthy aim—viii.

"Whatever else concerning him has been controverted by anybody, the fifty thousand lawyers of the United States, interested to deny his pretensions, conceded to him an unapproachable supremacy at the bar. How did he win that high place? Where others studied laboriously, he meditated intensely. Where others appealed to the prejudices and passions of courts and juries, he addressed only their understandings. Where others lost themselves among the streams, he ascended to the fountain. While they sought the rules of law among conflicting precedents, he found them in the eternal principles of reason and justice.

"But it is conceding too much to the legal profession to call Daniel Webster a lawyer. Lawyers speak for clients and their interests—he seemed always to be speaking for his country and for truth. So he rose imperceptibly above his profession; and while yet in the Forum he stood before the world a Publicist. In this felicity he resembled, while he surpassed, Erskine, who taught the courts at Westminster the law of moral responsibility; and he approached Hamilton, who educated the courts at Washington in the constitution of their country and the philosophy of government.—WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

Adams and Jefferson in fate and fame, p. 26.—An interesting letter from Josiah Quincy (Mr. Lowell's "A Great Public Character") to Webster, bearing date Boston, August 3, 1826, the day following the delivery of the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson, furnishes valuable testimony to the immediate brilliant effect on the best minds produced by that oration. It shows also the peculiar esteem admiration and affection in which the orator was held:

"Your perfect success yesterday ought to be as satisfactory to you as it is to your friends. I think nothing has ever exceeded or, perhaps, equalled it."

Quincy then proposes to Webster the question whether he intended to attribute to Hancock an imaginary speech against the Declaration of Independence, alluded to in the eulogy. Such was the general impression, Quincy says, contrary to his own. Quincy was right, and the rest were wrong.

"If I am mistaken," Quincy says, "and the general impression concerning this part of your discourse be correct, then permit me, in that deep sentiment of respect and affection which I entertain for your name, fame and influence, all which I would have as spotless as it is brilliant, to inquire," etc.

The concluding portion of the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson is as follows; it will serve to justify and illustrate more than one of the allusions of the poem:

"And now, fellow citizens, let us not retire from this occasion without a deep and solemn conviction of the duties which have devolved upon us. This lovely land, this glorious liberty, these benign institutions, the dear purchase of our fathers, are ours; ours to enjoy, ours to preserve, ours to transmit. Generations past and generations to come hold us responsible for this sacred trust. Our fathers, from behind, admonish us, with their anxious paternal voices; posterity calls out to us, from the bosom of the future; the world turns hither its solicitous eyes; all, all conjure us to act wisely, and faithfully, in the relation we sustain. We can never, indeed, pay the debt which is upon us; but by virtue, by morality, by religion, by the cultivation of every good principle and every good habit, we may hope to enjoy the blessing, through our day, and to leave it unimpaired to our children. Let us feel deeply how much of what we are and of what we possess we owe to this liberty, and to these institutions of government. Nature has, indeed, given us a soil which yields bounteously to the hand of industry, the mighty and fruitful ocean is before us, and the skies over our heads shed health and vigor. But what are lands, and seas, and skies, to civilized man, without society, without knowledge, without morals, without religious culture; and how can these be enjoyed, in all their extent and all their excellence, but under the protection of wise institutions and a free government? Fellow citizens, there is not one of us, there is not one of us here present, who does not, at this moment, and at every moment, experience in his own condition, and in the condition of those most near and dear to him, the influence and the benefits of this liberty and these institutions. Let us then acknowledge the blessing, let us feel it deeply and powerfully, let us cherish a strong affection for it, and resolve to maintain and perpetuate it. The blood of our fathers, let it not have been shed in vain; the great hope of posterity, let it not be blasted.

"The striking attitude, too, in which we stand to the world around us, a topic, to which, I fear, I advert too often, and dwell on too long, cannot be altogether omitted here. Neither individuals nor nations can perform their part well, until they understand and feel its importance, and comprehend and justly appreciate all the duties belonging to it. It is not to inflate national vanity, nor to swell a light and empty feeling of self-importance, but it is that we may judge justly of our situation, and of our own duties, that I earnestly urge upon you this consideration of our position and our character among the nations of the earth. It cannot be denied, but by those who would dispute against the sun, that with America, and in America, a new era commences in human affairs. This era is distinguished by free representative governments, by entire religious liberty, by improved systems of national intercourse, by a newly awakened and an unconquerable spirit of free inquiry, and by a diffusion of knowledge through the community, such as has been before altogether unknown and unheard of. America, America, our country, fellow citizens, our own dear and native land, is inseparably connected, fast bound up, in fortune

and by fate, with these great interests. If they fall, we fall with them; if they stand, it will be because we have maintained them. Let us contemplate, then, this connection, which binds the prosperity of others to our own; and let us manfully discharge all the duties which it imposes. If we cherish the virtues and the principles of our fathers, Heaven will assist us to carry on the work of human liberty and human happiness. Auspicious omens cheer us. Great examples are before us. Our own firmament now shines brightly upon our path. WASHINGTON is in the clear, upper sky. These other stars have now joined the American constellation; they circle round their centre, and the heavens beam with new light. Beneath this illumination let us walk the course of life, and at its close devoutly commend our beloved country, the common parent of us all, to the Divine Benignity."

JOHN ADAMS TO DANIEL WEBSTER.

DEAR SIR:—I thank you for your discourse delivered at Plymouth on the termination of the second century of the landing of our forefathers. Unable to read it, from defect of sight, it was last night read to me by our friend Shaw. The fullest justice that I could do it would be to transcribe it at full length. It is the effort of a great mind, richly stored with every species of information. If there be an American who can read it without tears, I am not that American. It enters more perfectly into the genuine spirit of New England, than any production I ever read. The observations on the Greeks and Romans; on colonization in general; on the West India Islands; on the past, present, and future in America, and on the slave trade, are sagacious, profound, and affecting in a high degree.

Mr. Burke is no longer entitled to the praise—the most consummate orator of modern times.

What can I say of what regards myself? To my humble name, "Exegisti monumentum aere perennius."

This oration will be read five hundred years hence, with as much rapture as it was heard. It ought to be read at the end of every century, and indeed at the end of every year, for ever and ever.

I am, sir, with the profoundest esteem, your obliged friend and very humble servant, JOHN ADAMS.

MONTEZILLO, December 23, 1821.

Yet his words of cheer were sober, and he checked and chastened joy,
Teaching us, by heed of duty, in the man to merge the boy.—x.

"Let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation, and on us, sink deep into our hearts. Those who established our liberty and our government are daily dropping from among us. The great trust now descends to new hands. Let us apply ourselves to that which is presented to us as our appropriate object. We can win no laurels in a war for independence. Earlier and worthier hands have gathered them all. Nor are there places for us by the side of Solon, and Alfred, and other founders of states. Our fathers have filled them. But there remains to us a great duty of defence and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit, to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great objects which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settled conviction, and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four States are one country. Let our conceptions be enlarged to the circle of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, OUR COUNTRY, OUR WHOLE COUNTRY, AND NOTHING BUT OUR COUNTRY. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever."—WEBSTER, *at the laying of the corner stone of the Bunker Hill monument.*

Seemed to find in his one bosom room capacious of it all—x.

"In looking over the public remains of his oratory, it is striking to remark how, even in that most sober and massive understanding and nature, you see gathered and expressed the characteristic sentiments and the passing time of our America. It is the strong old oak which ascends before you; yet our soil, our heavens, are attested in it, as perfectly as if it were a flower that could grow in no other climate and in no other hour of the year or day. Let me instance in one thing only. It is a peculiarity of some schools of eloquence that they embody and utter, not merely the individual genius and character of the speaker, but a national consciousness,—a national era, a mood, a hope, a dread, a despair,—in which you listen to the spoken history of the time. There is an eloquence of an expiring nation, such as seems to sadden the glorious speech of Demosthenes; such as breathes grand and gloomy from the visions of the prophets of the last days of Israel and Judah; such as gave a spell to the expression of Grattan and Kossuth,—the sweetest, most mournful, most

awful of the words that man may utter, or which man may hear,—the eloquence of a perishing nation. There is another eloquence, in which the national consciousness of a young or renewed and vast strength, of trust in a dazzling, certain, and limitless future, an inward glorying in victories yet to be won, sound out as by the voice of clarion, challenging to contest for the highest prize of earth; such as that in which the leader of Israel in its first days holds up to the new nation the Land of Promise; such as that in which in the well-imagined speeches scattered by Livy over the history of the 'majestic series of victories' speaks the Roman consciousness of growing aggrandizement which should subject the world; such as that through which, at the tribunes of her revolution, in the bulletins of her rising soldier, France told to the world her dream of glory. And of this kind somewhat is ours; cheerful, hopeful, trusting, as befits youth and spring; the eloquence of a State beginning to ascend to the first class of power, eminence, and consideration, and conscious of itself. It is to no purpose that they tell you it is in bad taste; that it partakes of arrogance and vanity; that a true national good breeding would not know, or seem to know, whether the nation is old or young; whether the tides of being are in their flow or ebb; whether these courses of the sun are sinking slowly to rest, wearied with a journey of a thousand years, or just bounding from the Orient unbreathed. Higher laws than those of taste determine the consciousness of nations. Higher laws than those of taste determine the general forms of the expression of that consciousness. Let the downward age of America find its orators and poets and artists to erect its spirits, or grace and soothe its dying; be it ours to go up with Webster to the rock, the monument, the capitol, and bid 'the distant generations hail!'"—RUFUS CHOATE.

His equal mood sedate,
Self-governing, wise to wait,
Reverent toward God, he shared to thee, O State!—iv.

"The mingled energy and temperance of national character, implied in this orderly liberty, has perhaps, in Mr. Webster, its grandest individual expression. Most of his own political life was passed in opposition, and opposition in many cases to innovations he deemed foolish and ruinous; but he ever exhibited that solid temper which bears temporary defeat with fortitude, which doggedly persists in the hope of future victory, and which scorns to resist constituted authority by the demagogue's weapons of faction or anarchy. He knew, as well as well as the most fiery and impatient radical, that such a course is not the most attractive to the imagination and passions, and not always to the impulses of the moral nature. 'It is no pleasant employment,' he says, in reference to his own long opposition to General Jackson's administration, 'it is no holiday business, to maintain opposition against power and against majorities, and to contend for stern and sturdy principles against personal popularity—against a rushing and overwhelming confidence that, by wave upon wave, and cataract after cataract, seems to be bearing away and destroying whatsoever would withstand it."—*Westminster Review, January*, 1853.

Miscalled it pride, that scorn of popular arts—xi.

"But I might recall other evidences of the sterling and unusual qualities of his public virtue. Look in how manly a sort he—not merely conducted a particular argument or a particular speech, but in how manly a sort, in how high a moral tone, he uniformly dealt with the mind of his country. Politicians got an advantage of him for this while he lived; let the dead have just praise to-day. Our public life is one long electioneering, and even Burke tells you that at popular elections the most rigorous casuists will remit something of their severity. But where do you find him flattering his countrymen, indirectly or directly, for a vote? On what did he ever place himself but good counsels and useful service? His arts were manly arts, and he never saw a day of temptation, when he would not rather fall than stand on any other. Who ever heard that voice cheering the people on to rapacity, to injustice, to a vain and guilty glory? Who ever saw that pencil of light hold up a picture of 'manifest destiny' to dazzle the fancy? How anxiously rather, in season and out, by the energetic eloquence of his youth, by his counsels bequeathed on the verge of a timely grave, he preferred to teach that by all possible acquired sobriety of mind, by asking reverently of the past, by obedience to the law, by habits of patient and obedient labor, by the cultivation of the mind, by the fear and worship of God, we educate ourselves for the future that is revealing. Men said he did not sympathize with the masses, because his phraseology was rather of an old and simple school, rejecting the nauseous and vain repetitions of humanity and philanthropy, and progress and brotherhood, in which may lurk heresies so dreadful, of socialism or disunion; in which a selfish, hollow, and shallow ambition masks itself,—the siren song which would lure the pilot from his course. But I say he did sympathize with them; and because he did, he came to them not with adulation but with truth; not with words to please, but with measures to serve them; not that his popular sympathies were less, but that his personal and intellectual dignity and his public morality were greater."—RUFUS CHOATE.

Wide hopes he learned for thee,
His country, soon to be
Wide as his hopes outspread from sea to sea.—iii.

"And now, Mr. President, instead of speaking of the possibility or utility of secession, instead of dwelling in these caverns of darkness, instead of groping with those ideas so full of all that is horrid and horrible, let us come out into the light of day; let us enjoy the fresh airs of Liberty and Union; let us cherish those hopes which belong to us; let us devote ourselves to those great objects that are fit for our consideration and our action; let us raise our conceptions to the magnitude and the importance of the duties that devolve upon us; let our comprehension be as broad as the country for which we act, our aspirations as high as its certain destiny; let us not be pygmies in a case that calls for men. Never did there devolve

on any generation of men higher trusts than now devolve upon us for the preservation of this Constitution and the harmony and peace of all who are destined to live under it. Let us make our generation one of the strongest and the brightest links in that golden chain which is destined, I fondly believe, to grapple the people of all the States to this Constitution for ages to come. It is a great popular constitutional government, guarded by legislation, by law, by judicature, and defended by the whole affections of the people. No monarchical throne presses these States together; no iron chain of despotic power encircles them; they live and stand upon a government popular in its form, representative in its character, founded upon principles of equality, and calculated, we hope, to last forever. In all its history it has been beneficent; it has trodden down no man's liberty; it has crushed no State. Its daily respiration is liberty and patriotism; its yet youthful veins all full of enterprise, courage and honorable love of glory and renown. Large before, the country has now, by recent events, become vastly larger. This republic now extends with a vast breadth across the whole continent. The two great seas of the world wash the one and the other shore. We realize, on a mighty scale, the beautiful description of the ornamental edging of the buckler of Achilles:

> "'Now the broad shield complete the artist crowned
> With his last hand, and poured the ocean round;
> In living silver seemed the waves to roll,
> And beat the buckler's verge, and bound the whole.'"
>
> —*Webster's Speech*, March 7, 1850.

The man was more than the great words he spoke, p. 5.—"There was also a general feeling in the United States that the man was infinitely greater than his works—a belief in a reserved power in his character which circumstances left undeveloped, or which no adequate emergency had called forth. He was so uniformly victorious over every eminent man with whom he came into collision in debate, and achieved his triumphs with such a seeming absence of strain and effort, calmly putting forth just strength enough to ensure his success, and affording here and there vanishing glimpses of idle reserves of argument and passion, which he did not deem necessary to bring into action, that the impression he universally made was that of a man great by original constitution, with an incalculable personal force behind his manifested mental power, and therefore one whose deeds were not the measure of his capacity."—*Westminster Review, January.*

The thunderer stood, and chose from out his store—xii.

"What were his sensations during the delivery of this splendid oration, he has himself narrated in answer to a friend. 'I felt,' said he, 'as if everything I had ever seen, or read, or heard, was floating before me in one grand panorama, and I had little else to do than to reach up and cull a thunderbolt and *hurl* it at him.'"

A different hand makes this substantially similar note of the same statement from Mr. Webster.

"He has left on record his feelings when he rose to reply. After the first dizzy moment was over, during which a sea of faces whirled around him; after a single recollection that his brother had fallen dead a few years before in a climax of similar excitement, his faculties appeared to grow strangely calm, and there opened before him, as in a boundless gulf of space, all that he had ever read, or thought, or felt, so that he had but to summon, with a wish, whatever he required, and it came."

The circumstances of his brother's death, to which he here refers, are related as follows:

"Mr. Webster was speaking, standing erect, on a plain floor, the house full, and the court, and jurors, and auditors intently listening to his words, with all their eyes fastened upon him. Speaking with full force, and perfect utterance, he arrived at the end of one branch of his argument. He closed that branch, uttered the last sentence, and the last word of that sentence, with perfect tone and emphasis, and then, in an instant, erect, and with arms depending by his side, he fell backward, without bending a joint, and, so far as appeared, was dead before his head reached the floor."—*Private Correspondence* I, p. 42.

Eloquence rapt into action, action like a god, sublime—x.

"Who that heard it, or has read it, will ever forget the desolating energy of his denunciation of the African Slave Trade, in the discourse at Plymouth, or the splendor of the apostrophe to Warren, in the first discourse on Bunker Hill; or that to the monumental shaft and the survivors of the Revolution in the second; or the trumpet-tones of the speech placed in the lips of John Adams, in the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson; or the sublime peroration of the speech on Foot's resolution; or the lyric fire of the imagery by which he illustrates the extent of the British Empire; or the almost supernatural terror of his description of the force of conscience in the argument in Knapp's trial. Then how fresh and bright the description of Niagara! how beautiful the picture of the morning in his private correspondence, which as well as his familiar conversation, was enlivened by the perpetual play of a joyous and fertile imagination! In a word, what tone in all the grand and melting music of our language is there which is not heard in some portion of his speeches or writings; while reason, sense and truth compose the basis of the strain? Like the sky above

us, it is sometimes serene and cloudless, and peace and love shine out from its starry depths. At other times the gallant streamers, in wild fantastic play—emerald, and rose, and orange, and fleecy white—shoot upward from the horizon, mingle in a fiery canopy at the zenith, and throw out their flickering curtains over the heavens and the earth; while at other times the mustering tempest piles his towering battlements on the sides of the north; a furious storm-wind rushes forth from their blazing loop-holes, and volleyed thunders give the signal of the elemental war."—

EDWARD EVERETT.

Height elate, transfigured feature, majesty sublime with grace—x.

"Great as many of these are as compositions, they lose much of their essential spirit in being reported, from the absence of the subtle, elastic, life-communicating energy, which streamed from the majestic presence, and kindled in the inspiring voice of the orator himself. A form of imposing manhood—a head and brow which had no parallel among twenty-five millions of people for massiveness—a swarthy face, dark, glittering, flexible to all emotions—eyes flashing with intelligence—a voice of great strength and compass, capable of being heard by ten thousand people in the open air, and of unapproachable power in its upper piercing tones—and all enforced by action which seemed to be the very instrument of will;—to be in the presence of these on some occasion worthy of their exercise was, for the time, to have no thoughts, sentiments, or passions but those which were gleaming in the eyes, and heaving in the breast, and quivering in the uplifted arm of the self-enkindled orator before you."—*Westminster Review, January*, 1853.

Glorious in the awful beauty of Olympian form and face—x.

"The cubic capacity of his head surpassed all former measurements of mind. Since Charlemagne, I think there has not been such a grand figure in all Christendom. A large man, decorous in dress, dignified in deportment, he walked as if he felt himself a king. Men from the country, who knew him not, stared at him as he passed through our streets. The coal-heavers and porters of London looked on him as one of the great forces of the globe; they recognized a native king. In the Senate of the United States he looked an emperor in that council. Even the majestic Calhoun seemed common compared with him. Clay looked vulgar, and Van Buren but a fox. His countenance, like Strafford's, was 'manly black.' His mind

Was lodged in a fair and lofty room.
On his brow
Sat terror, mixed with wisdom; and at once
Saturn and Hermes in his countenance.

What a mouth he had! It was a lion's mouth; yet there was a sweet grandeur in his smile, and a woman's softness when he would. What

a brow it was! What eyes! like charcoal fires in the bottom of a deep, dark well. His face was rugged with volcanic fires—great passions and great thoughts—

The front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command.

—*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

Voice that like the pealing clarion clear above the battle loud—x.

"I was present (then a boy), in the outskirts of that vast audience, and well remember that, when order was restored, after the confusion described by Mr. Ticknor, Mr. Webster's clarion voice was distinctly heard at the spot where I stood. His voice, in public speaking, was a very peculiar one. Whether speaking in the open air, or under a roof, he could make himself heard to a great distance, apparently without much effort, and without being unpleasantly loud to those who were near him. This was partly due to the *quality* of his voice, which was naturally pitched at a high key, but which was tempered by such a richness of tone that it was never in the smallest degree shrill. It was due also to what might be called the *quantity* of his voice. He had an unusual capacity of chest and vocal organs, and hence his voice was one of extraordinary volume. It was, moreover, so entirely under his control, when his vocal organs were in full play, that it never broke, however high it might rise in the scale of its natural compass, or whatever might be the state of his emotions. At the same time, there was a peculiarity about his organs of speech that I have heard him describe as a momentary paralysis. It sometimes happened to him, on rising to speak suddenly, that they utterly refused to perform their office until moistened by a slight draught of water. As soon as this was done the inability vanished, and did not return upon him."
—*Curtis's Life of Webster.*

Slow imagination kindling, kindling slow, but flaming vast—x.

"His imagination seems to have been a faculty roused by the action of his nature after it had reached a certain pitch of excitement; and then partakes of the general grandeur of his mind."—*Westminster Review, Jan.*, 1853.

That grave Websterian speech—iv.

"Webster disdained all parade of rhetoric or logic, of learning or eloquence; would not affect excitement when he was not excited; and was probably the only great orator too proud to please an expectant audience by any exaggeration of the subject on which he spoke.

"Objects lay in his mind as they lie in nature; and their natural order was never disturbed in his speech from any appetite for applause.

"Always equal to the occasion, he despised all lifting of the occasion to the height of his own reputation."—*Westminster Review, January*, 1853.

His equal mood sedate,
Self-governing, wise to wait—iv.

[It was noted editorially in the *Evening Post* newspaper, Mr. Bryant's journal, in the course of an article not by any means unmixedly eulogistic, written on the occasion of Webster's death, that such was the habitual self-restraint of his bearing that throughout the forty years of his public life he had never, within the knowledge or belief of the writer, exposed himself to be called to order in even the most exciting debates of the parliamentary assembly. [For the foregoing I have been obliged to rely on memory of several years since.]

This trait of self-restraint in Webster, and its tempering from the religious sense, attracted the attention of a writer in the "Westminster Review" for January, 1853, who says:

"Commonly, his intellect, though penetrated with will, is free from wilfulness. Always self-moved, it was very rare that he was morbidly self-conscious; and while he was not an economist in the use of the personal pronoun, he purged the 'I' from all idiosyncrasies. It was the understanding of the man that spoke so imperiously, not his prejudice or egotism. Pride of intellect was, in him, identical with pride of character; and he would have felt the same shame in being detected in a sophism or falsehood. Misrepresentation is, in his view, as deadly an intellectual as moral sin. Accordingly, he seems to reason under a sense of personal responsibility, and his statements sound like depositions taken under oath. His perceptions of things and their relations were so clear, calm, and comprehensive, that his countrymen always held him morally accountable for mental error, and judged his logic in the spirit in which they would judge another man's motives. As he never received, so he never appeared to expect any toleration for mistakes; he was ready to stand or fall by the plain reason of his case; and, while his facts and arguments were unanswered or unanswerable, he rarely honored an insinuation leveled at his motives by an outbreak of rage, but treated it with a toss of imperious contempt or a flash of withering scorn. He could not, had he been in Burke's place, have condescended to write the 'Letter to a Noble Lord.' Thus, when a library of vituperation was written against him for remaining in the cabinet of Mr. Tyler, after the other Whig members had resigned, he remarked, in the course of a speech to some of his friends in Massachusetts: 'No man of sense can suppose that, without strong motive, I should wish to differ in conduct from those with whom I had long acted; and as for those persons whose charity leads them to seek for such motive in the hope of personal advantage, neither their candor nor their sagacity deserves anything but contempt.' The look which accompanied this, and the tone in which 'candor' and 'sagacity' were uttered, had an intensity of meaning more effective than volumes of ordinary invective."—*Westminster Review*, *January*, 1853.

[From Scribner's Monthly for July, 1876.]

DANIEL WEBSTER AND THE COMPROMISE MEASURES OF 1850.

Is it not time we reconsidered our verdict on Daniel Webster—the Daniel Webster, I mean, of 1850, and the compromise measures?

But there have been two verdicts—a verdict of the few, in his favor, and a verdict of the many, against him. It is the verdict of the many against him concerning which I raise the question, whether it should not be revised and reversed.

I herewith move to reopen the case. Speaking in the name of the majority, grown since the death of the man, until now, as it seems to me, it comprises almost the whole new American nation; speaking in this collective name, I ask, Were we not passionate and hasty? We have outlived our haste and our passion, but our condemnation still rests on the man whom we condemned.

Have we not done Webster wrong? Was he guilty? We had reason, but had we good reason? Perhaps we mistook, and pronounced, unawares, our curse on the innocent head. Let us call back our scapegoat from the wilderness, and consider whether we shall not unpronounce our curse. Let us do more. Let us make ready to change our curse into a blessing, if Webster deserves it—a blessing tardy, indeed, but full-hearted at last, and forty million strong. It may be a not unsuitable act of justice, on our part, with which to celebrate and signalize this memorial year of the nation.

If it was not a fall ignominiously suffered, it may have been a stand heroically maintained—that speech of the seventh of March eighteen hundred fifty. Then, too, the cycle of popular harangues with which, during the two following years that preceded his death, he supported his speech in the Senate, will appear to have been a long agony of Laocoon, on Webster's part, in which Laocoon stood, and did not fall; in which he stood, and, standing, upheld the falling State of Troy. To the purpose of showing that such was, indeed, the fact, I devote the present paper.

I accordingly invite the reader to enter with me upon a summary examination of Webster's public course in connection with the memorable compromise measures, so called, of eighteen hundred fifty.

He supported those measures in Congress and before the people. I should say, perhaps, supported the principle of those measures rather than those measures themselves. For Webster was not in the Senate when the measures were adopted, and he never pretended to approve them entirely in the form which they finally assumed. Still it is not too much, probably, to say that his influence carried them in Congress; and it is certainly not too much to say that his influence procured their acceptance by the country.

His responsibility for them is thus seen to be very large. It is quite just, therefore, that he should, in a great degree, be judged by his part in these momentous transactions. He has himself put on record his

own opinion, that his speech on the general subject, delivered March 7, 1850, in the United States Senate, was probably to be regarded as the most important speech of his life. As respects, at least, his own subsequent fame, it has, thus far, proved, indeed, to be of pregnant and disastrous importance. But he expected, as also he elected, to be judged by it. He made that speech, as he made all his speeches, after full and ripe deliberation of his course. He never afterward repented of his words. Nay, he said his words over and over again, with august eloquence, with solemn emphasis, in a series of the most remarkable popular addresses that have ever passed into literature, during the brief critical period that intervened before his death, in 1852. Let us judge Daniel Webster, fairly and strictly, by his relation to the compromise measures of 1850. We shall but be giving to him the judgment that he himself invoked.

We may conveniently pursue our examination, by considering successively, in their order, the following questions, which, perhaps, well enough cover the whole extent of the case:

1. Did Webster act conscientiously?
2. Did he act consistently?
3. Did he act patriotically?
4. Did he act wisely?
5. Did he act right?

First, then, Was Webster conscientous in supporting the compromise measures of 1850?

Those measures included as a conspicuous feature, the famous, or infamous, or famous and infamous, Fugitive Slave Law. This, certainly, looks bad. That was a shocking law. It was shocking in two aspects. It was shocking for the thing it sought to do, and it was shocking for the way in which it sought to do that thing. It sought to remand the fugitive slave to his slavery. In course of doing this, it claimed to make, at the simple beck of the marshal who was pursuing the alleged fugitive, a slave-catcher of every freeman that chanced to be at hand, and it virtually tendered to the judicial officer engaged a petty bribe to decide against, instead of for, the hunted man. In a word, it proposed to do a shocking work in a gratuitously shocking way. This must not be disguised. Indeed, it cannot be. Any statesman might well pray to be delivered from the dire supposed necessity of sustaining such a law. For the Fugitive Slave Law was, *in itself*, an almost irredeemably odious enactment.

But let us candidly consider Webster's actual part in sustaining this odious law. What was his part? Did he originate it? No. Did he speak, as a legislator, in favor of adopting it? No. Did he, as a legislator, vote for the law? No. What then did he do respecting it? *After* its enactment, he advised and persuaded his countrymen to accept it and abide by it. That was Webster's actual public part in the support of the Fugitive Slave Law.

Large, therefore, as was Webster's just responsibility for the com-

promise measures of 1850, his responsibility was not that of the legislator who projected them, or who urged their first adoption. It was chiefly the responsibility of a citizen, and of an administrative officer, who counseled to his countrymen good faith in accepting legislation once accomplished, objectionable though it was, as the prudent choice, and, therefore, the morally right choice, among necessary evils.

But did not the seventh of March speech, by anticipation, cover the Fugitive Slave Bill that was to be, or something even worse than that, with Webster's explicit and emphatic approval? So Theodore Parker asserts in his celebrated discourse. But Theodore Parker is mistaken. Webster was, indeed, misreported by the newspapers of the time, to have used the following language: "My friend at the head of the Judiciary Committee [Mr. Mason] has a bill on the subject now before the Senate with some amendments to it, which I propose to support, with all its provisions to the fullest extent." The relative "which" was here misplaced. The sentence should have read: "A bill on the subject now before the Senate, which, with some amendments to it, I propose to support," etc. So the words stand in the text of the speech, as printed in Webster's Works.* The correction was promptly and publicly made at the time. It is hard, therefore, to understand how a man of conscience, as Theodore Parker certainly was, could reconcile it with his sense of honesty, to repeat this injurious accusation two years afterward over the great statesman's fresh-made grave. The fact seems to be, that Theodore Parker's fiery zeal for human freedom became a furnace, in which, too often, charity and scruple alike were consumed.

What, then, Webster really did, in his seventh of March speech, respecting the return of fugitive slaves, was to pledge his support as legislator to *some* law supposed to be effective for that purpose. But was not even this inexcusable on Webster's part? Could any law for a purpose so revolting deserve Webster's support as a national legislator? Irrespective of bad features that it might incidentally contain, was not a fugitive slave law bad in its essential purpose? Yes, certainly, regarded absolutely, such a law, however framed, was bad. But badness is always relative—that is to say, some things are worse than others. That which is absolutely bad may be relatively good—which is precisely what is true concerning a suitable fugitive slave law. Absolutely, such a law was bad—bad, exactly as the Federal Constitution itself was bad, being accurately on the same moral level with that instrument, neither better nor worse. The Federal Constitution expressly provided for the return to their masters of absconding slaves. This Constitution every national, and, indeed, every State legislator took an oath to support. To favor, in good faith, therefore, *some* effective law for the purpose, was only to do what every member of the national councils, in becoming such member, had implicitly sworn to do.

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*Vol. v., pp. 354-355.

Was not, then, the Federal Constitution itself bad? To this question the same answer as before must be given. Absolutely, yes,—relatively, no. The constituting of the Union among these States, however bad in some respects, was, on the whole, better than the alternative. It was so at the beginning. It remained so in 1850. It remained so, we thought, in 1861, and we did not give up thinking so during four disastrous years of fratricidal war.

We have thus briefly answered the question, Why should Webster, acting as national legislator, have volunteered to support *any* fugitive slave law? It was his plain duty to do so—a duty implicitly acknowledged by him, and by all his fellow legislators in common with him, in the very oath itself by which they and he became part of the public councils of the nation. Besides, the Supreme Court of the United States, Justice Story concurring, and himself preparing the decision, had before decided, contrary to Webster's long-cherished, and then still cherished, conviction of constitutional propriety, that the active duty of discharging the obligation respecting fugitive slaves belonged to Congress, and not to individual States. Still further, as matter of history, many of the Northern States, gratifying an irresponsible fondness for empty demonstration of the instinct of liberty, had enacted obstructive laws, some of them denouncing penalties to any of their officials who should participate in the recovery of fugitive slaves. It thus happened that there was left to the national legislator absolutely no honorable way of escape from the hateful obligation to provide a fugitive slave law. Good faith required that the obligation be frankly acknowledged and honestly fulfilled—required it of Webster, and required it of Webster's associates and successors as well—unless, indeed (for I must be careful myself to observe the considerate charity which Webster's own constant example enjoins)—unless, indeed, I say, their conscientious views were different from his. "Now, sir," said Webster, in a speech on the Compromise measures, delivered in the Senate, July 17, 1850, "I ascribe nothing but the best and purest motives to any of the gentlemen, on either side of this chamber, or of the other house, who take a view of this subject which differs from my own. * * * They are just as high-minded, as patriotic, as pure, and every way as well-intentioned as I am." Again at Buffalo, in 1851, he used a similar strain of language. Such noble self-restraint and generosity on Webster's own part imposes obligations on Webster's defender.

But now a further question remains: Why should Webster, as a citizen, have supported the actual fugitive slave law of history? To this question a twofold answer may be given. First, it *was* a law, and law-abiding was of the deepest instinct and most seated habit of Webster's mind. He may be said to have given his whole life, in the main, to the one work of teaching his countrymen the value to them of their institutions of government. He had won his greatest fame, on a signal former occasion of deliberative strife, in vindicating the obligation of Federal law

against the brilliant and subtle sophistications of Hayne and Calhoun. That former occasion concerned a matter in which the South was the party feeling aggrieved. Here a matter arose, in which the party feeling aggrieved was the North. What kind of broad national statesmanship, what kind of consistent fair dealing, would that be, which should itself take to "nullifying" now, having memorably demonstrated the folly of "nullification" then? As Webster said of himself in his own grand way, in that great platform speech of his, delivered at Buffalo, in May, 1851 (which I would have every young countryman of mine study, for its manly popular eloquence, for its ripe historical wisdom, conspicuous by the clear analysis and perspective in which it is displayed, and last, for its noble and ennobling moral tone), he was made a whole man, and he did not mean to make himself half a one. The consideration that the Fugitive Slave Bill had been enacted—that it was now part of the supreme law of the land, would alone have been sufficient to determine Webster in its favor.

But there was another consideration that with him was more cogent still. He thought that some fair law for the purpose, and the enacted law, since it had been enacted, was essential to the preservation of the national Union. I do not say now that Webster was wise in thinking this—for I am not yet discussing the wisdom of his course—I only say that he thought it. He further thought that the preservation of the Union was the true paramount moral, as well as political, interest of the American people. Again, I do not say that, in holding this view, he was right, for I am not yet discussing the ethics of his course. I only say that he held this view.

I am defending Webster's honesty now. His consistency, his patriotism, his wisdom, his abstract ethical correctness even, are just now, and for the immediate purpose in hand, matters of secondary and subordinate interest. I do not care how consistent he was, nor how patriotic, nor how wise, nor even how right, in the abstract, he may, by some good luck, but without conscious purpose, have happened to be—if he was not honest. If Webster was hollow and insincere, if he played the hypocrite, if he lied, let him remain damned, say I, in the general esteem, and let his memory stink. I would not cast a sprig of rosemary on his dishonored and dishonorable grave. But, if Webster meant well, however he erred grievously in judgment, why, then, we may continue to have, at least, a mighty fragment left to us from a broken fame—something better than a torso, being not beheaded and bereft of the chief glory and crown, its sky-beholding front unashamed—for our sobered but still delighted admiration.

Charles Francis Adams was the first "Free Soil" candidate for Vice-President of the United States. He was an ardent anti-slavery partisan. He differed with Daniel Webster in 1850. He perhaps inherited something of an ancestral prepossession against Daniel Webster. At any rate, he identified himself with the rapidly developing political organization that subsequently became the victorious Republican party, and, at length,

elected Abraham Lincoln. Ten years had now elapsed; the Compromise measures were still standing undisturbed as laws, on the statute-book of the nation. The Missouri Compromise, meantime, had been abrogated, and Kansas had, in consequence, been made the theater of most disgraceful border strife in the interest of slavery propagandism. The Constitution, notwithstanding, was ostensibly maintained. The peace had not yet been broken by any act of war. Menaces, however, of secession in Congress, ordinances of secession in slave State Legislatures, were the order of the day. Whole delegations of Senators and Representatives from several seceding States had ostentatiously and defiantly withdrawn from their seats in the council chambers of the Capitol at Washington. In one word, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FIFTY had returned again, and worse.

Under these circumstances, after a whole decade of years spent in sleepless agitation at the North, always resounding with "rubadub" defamation of Webster for his treachery to freedom—what spectacle then did the Republican majority in Congress present to the world and to history? Why, they passed, by an overwhelming vote, joint resolutions of the two houses, substantially affirming the position of Webster in 1850! The name of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, then in Congress from Massachusetts, heads the list of AYES. Here are the resolutions, abridged for want of space, but not misrepresented:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all attempts on the parts of the Legislatures of any of the States to obstruct or hinder the recovery and surrender of fugitives from service or labor, are in derogation of the Constitution of the United States, inconsistent with the comity and good neighborhood that should prevail among the several States, and dangerous to the peace of the Union.

Resolved, That the several States be respectfully requested to cause their statutes to be revised, with a view to ascertain if any of them are in conflict with, or tend to embarrass or hinder the execution of the laws of the United States, made in pursuance of the second section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, for the delivering up of persons held to labor by the laws of any State and escaping therefrom; and the Senate and House of Representatives earnestly request that all enactments having such tendency be forthwith repealed. * * * *

Resolved, That we recognize the justice and propriety of a faithful execution of the Constitution and laws made in pursuance thereof, on the subject of fugitive slaves, or fugitives from service or labor, and discountenance all mobs or hindrances to the execution of such laws, and that citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.

Mark, when these resolutions were passed, the Fugitive Slave Law, that "bill of abominations," was unrepealed and unamended; the Territories remained unprotected by that "ordinance of freedom," the Wilmot Proviso; and still, what Webster was denounced without measure, not simply as unwise, not simply as inconsistent, but as *dishonest*, for doing in 1850, that same thing, in substance, ten years later, the headlong Republican majority in both houses of Congress were at unseemly and ridiculous pains to do in 1861.

Now, I suppose it will hardly be claimed that it was consistent for

eager Abolitionists to pass such resolutions as these. But, does it follow that Mr. Adams and the rest were all of them dishonest? That they were hypocrites, apostates? No; these gentlemen were frightened, and not without reason. Disunion loomed near at hand and it looked dreadful. It was a specter that they wanted to lay at any cost. Who can blame them? The whole country stood aghast, on the brink of disunion and war. From Boston, fourteen thousand one hundred twenty-seven legal voters, out of nineteen thousand that exercised the right of suffrage at the preceding election, sent to Congress a memorial, signed within two days' space, in favor of adopting measures of *compromise!* The Crittenden Compromise, which went far beyond the compromise of 1850 in yielding to Southern demands, was urged upon Congress by twenty-two thousand Boston signatures. No wonder if consternation invaded the halls of Congress. Men who had performed gallantly in the part of agitation and of opposition before, now found themselves brought face to face with the solemn responsibilities of administration and of power. The situation sobered them. They acted as it was natural to act. They acted inconsistently, but they did not act dishonestly. And, if Webster, too, of whose sagacity it was to foresee what they at last saw with their eyes—if Webster was inconsistent, let it be frankly confessed that he was also not more dishonest than they. For the very same behavior, to damn him, while we clear them—is this justice? But—

Was Webster inconsistent? That question is our second topic.

The heads under which inconsistency is alleged against Webster for his seventh of March speech, are the following: 1. His declaring in favor of the restoration of fugitive slaves; 2. His avowal respecting new States to be formed out of Texas; 3. His refusal to vote for applying the Wilmot Proviso to the Territories about to be organized.

The first one of these heads has already been treated. It need only be added that Webster never previously expressed himself in a sense hostile to restoring fugitive slaves, and that he had often expressed himself in a sense favorable to it.

As to the second one of these heads, Webster undoubtedly, though not then in Congress, opposed the annexation of Texas, when that project was in contemplation. The project notwithstanding succeeded. It succeeded by the votes of Northern men, who then immediately became pioneer "Free Soilers," that is, political Abolitionists. The consummating act took the form of a series of joint resolutions on the part of Congress, sealing a compact with the republic of Texas. One feature of the compact was this:

"New States of convenient size, not exceeding four in number, in addition to said State of Texas, and having sufficient population, may hereafter, by the consent of the said State, be formed out of the territory thereof, which shall be entitled to admission under the provisions of the Federal Constitution. And such States as may be formed out of that portion of said territory lying south of 36 deg. 30 min. north latitude, commonly known as the Missouri Compromise line, shall be admitted into the

Union with or without slavery, as the people of each State asking admission may desire; and in such State or States as shall be formed out of said territory north of said Missouri Compromise line, slavery or involuntary servitude (except for crime) shall be prohibited."

The meaning of this is as plain as language can well make it. Now, in his seventh of March speech, Mr. Webster, as befitted his capacity of statesman, very guardedly, but very firmly, expressed himself in favor of fulfilling the solemn State obligation thus created. It was a remote and contingent matter, but, hypothetically, Webster subscribed his name, and his fame, and his authority—to what? Why, to the observance of governmental honor and good faith. That was the whole of it. The fact of annexation, against Webster's efforts, was now fully accomplished. It was past and complete. Webster thought that statesmanship and state morality alike were concerned in recognizing it accordingly. Is such a view of the fact, accomplished, at all oppugnant to his previously urged objections to the accomplishing of the fact? What inconsistency is there between resolving, on the one hand, not to vote for annexation while annexation was in process, and resolving, on the other hand, to carry out the pledge of the Government implied in the act of annexation, when annexation was a fact?

The third head of allegation against the consistency of Webster may soon be dismissed. In the first place, it must candidly be admitted that a formal inconsistency does here exist. But the inconsistency is merely formal. Webster had, undoubtedly, often expressed himself in favor of the principle of prohibiting slavery by law in the Territories. On the seventh of March he waived, not the principle, but the application of the principle to Territories where he was satisfied the application was unnecessary. He still expressly adhered to the principle, for, in this very speech, he used the following language: "Wherever there is a particular good to be done; wherever there is a foot of land to be stayed back from becoming slave territory, I am ready to assert the principle of the exclusion of slavery." It was consistent for Webster to sacrifice consistency as to a matter of form, for the sake of that interest which he always regarded as paramount, namely, the safety and peace of the Union. Whether he acted wisely in doing as he did, I do not here consider. It is enough that, in the very article, and by the very fact, of consenting to be inconsistent in form, he, in substance, remained most truly consistent.

In the absence of direct proof that Webster was inconsistent or insincere, why, it will be natural to ask, should any one have had the face to accuse him of insincerity or inconsistency? What motive was imputed to Webster by his enemies for being, as they alleged, untrue to truth or to himself? To this inquiry there could be but one answer: The motive imputed was selfishness. Webster, they say, wanted to be President. This leads us to our third topic, the question,

Did Webster act patriotically?

Patriotically, that is, with reference to the Compromise measures of

1850. As respects his previous life, patriotism is conceded to Webster. On the seventh of March, however, it is charged that he fell—fell by ambition. His desire to be President proved too strong for his virtue. Let us candidly consider the charge.

In the first place, suppose it granted that Webster wished to be President. This, it is urged, was a weakness. Well, suppose that too yielded. It was not yet a baseness. It was the last infirmity of noble mind. Nothing is made out to Webster's discredit, except that he was human. The material point is untouched, what wrong thing did his weak wish lead him to do? The reply is prompt, it led him to seek Southern support. Well, what was there wrong in that? If he was to be President at all, ought he not to have sought Southern support? Not to receive Southern support would have been to be President of a section of the country, and to enter a wedge for the riving of the Union. True patriotism, Websterian patriotism certainly, required him to seek Southern support, if he sought to be President. The material point would still be, what wrong thing did he do to invite Southern support? The reply is, he did several wrong things. First, he offered to the South a fugitive slave law. Yes, but that offer was in the Constitution and in the decisions of the Supreme Court, before it was in Webster's speech. He offered to the South nothing that was not clearly its due. He simply gave it its own. But he upheld a worse fugitive slave law than it was necessary or wise to have. Yes, he did; but, at the same time, he declared, before all men, that the law was different from what he would have chosen, and that it was, in its nature, subject to amendment. Meantime, he urged, it ought to be executed. Well, there was the Wilmot Proviso; he offered to waive that in application to New Mexico and Utah. This he undoubtedly did; but in the same breath he explained that it was only because he thought slavery to be already, in another way, more certainly excluded. What offer was this to the South, except an offer magnanimously to forbear using superior strength for insult to the weak, where to use it for protection to the strong was not needful? But he offered to divide Texas into additional States, to be devoted to slavery. Yes, Webster did, indeed, with great caution of statement, volunteer to say that, in a certain necessarily remote, and probably quite impossible, future contingency, distinctly described in a solemn legislative pledge of the national faith, he would vote for admitting new slave-holding States, formed out of Texas, when they should present themselves with *sufficient* population. In other words, he stood forward as an honorable legislator should have done, and avowed himself ready to give to the South exactly what was nominated in the bond. With characteristic frankness and characteristic acuteness, he accompanied the avowal with a hint to the South that, in the word "sufficient" was hidden a just reserve, that might prove of great value to freedom.

What else is charged against Webster for his seventh of March speech? Nothing else worth particular mention. On these grounds, al-

most exclusively, Webster's defamers build their accusations against Webster's patriotism. With such offers as these to the South, Webster hoped, they say, to buy Southern support. And at what cost? Why, at the cost of losing the support of the North, capable of outvoting the South nearly two to one. What a desperate game! The South withheld its support. That simple fact is the best confutation of the charge. Webster was, undoubtedly, disappointed. In truth, he did not disguise his chagrin. But his chagrin was the chagrin of a patriot, and not that of a traitor. He was sorry, he said, to have a false chapter of history written. He believed that he had done the South justice, and he fully believed that justice would satisfy the South. It grieved him that the record should appear contrary to the fact, as he, perhaps too generously, assumed the fact to be. He probably hoped to see the South, by its action, convince the North that he had rightly represented its opinion and feeling. His patriotism was, in this instance, too sanguine, but it was not, therefore, the less noble nor the less saving. But the record, contrary or conformable to fact, is Webster's true vindication.

The truth is, Webster was conciliatory in temper, and tone, and expression, in his seventh of March speech; but, in point of substantial advantage, he *conceded* nothing whatever to the South. He was kindly just, and that was all. He was fully warranted in saying, as he said, with his peculiar inimitable Websterian emphasis, at Buffalo, in 1851: "If the South wish any concession from me, they will not get it; not one hair's breadth of it. If they come to my house for it, they will not find it, and the door will be shut; I concede nothing." Remember, that Webster could not say one word in public, that did not immediately make the circuit of the nation. He might as well have said these things in Charleston, as to have said them at Buffalo. The South read this speech, almost before the words ceased to burn from those fervent lips. And this, too, the South read, said in the same speech: "I am a Northern man. I was born at the North, educated at the North, have lived all my days at the North. I know five hundred Northern men to one Southern man. My sympathies, all my sympathies, my love of liberty for all mankind of every color, are the same as yours. * * * * You will find me true to the North, because all my sympathies are with the North. My affections, my children, my hope, my everything, are with the North."

Let it be borne in mind that these things were said previous to the Presidential election, that they were said as publicly as if they had been said in the Senate on the seventh of March, and that they were said to the South as much as to the North. And now, let candid men answer: What kind of bidding for Southern votes is this? What kind of subserviency to the South? Let our young men read the whole speech, and judge for themselves whether it was made by a patriot, or by a poltroon—judge for themselves, whether a vast concourse of people stood two hours on a spring day, unsheltered, in a drenching rain, to let a hoary renegade of seventy

years, unsheltered like themselves, though in feeble health, debauch their conscience, and stultify their common sense.

It may well be doubted if a statesman was ever placed in circumstances to undergo a severer test of the temper of his patriotism, than that which Webster underwent in 1850. Imagine the situation. North and South were balanced against each other, like the stem and the stern of a great ship, resting by her middle on a reef. The waves rocked the vessel of state and threatened to break her in two amidships. The utmost strain that she seemed able to bear, was wrenching her already, and still the storm increased. Every moment, she appeared about to go asunder. There was one hope of safety. That hope lay in measures of compromise. But a Northern statesman might well have said to himself: My section will not approve such measures. True, there is no other salvation. But that salvation, the North will never accept. My vote should not be wanting; but of what use will be my vote, if that for which I vote is spurned by my constituents? I shall merely damn myself in the opinion of those who, after the inevitable breach shall have come, must thenceforward be my countrymen. The breach, I shall not avert. My country is ruined, whatever I do, but why should I needlessly ruin myself? I will not vote for these measures. This would have been perfectly natural language for a statesman in Webster's situation to use. But Webster did not use it. He had no wish or thought to survive his country. "I have a part to act, not for my own security or safety," is his lofty and pathetic langugage of the seventh of March; "for I am looking out for no fragment on which to float away from the wreck, if wreck there must be; but for the good of the whole and the preservation of all, and there is that which will keep me to my duty during the struggle, whether the sun and the stars shall appear or shall not appear for many days. I speak to-day for the preservation of the Union. * * * * These are the motives and the sole motives that influence me, in the wish to communicate my opinions to the Senate and the country."

But Webster saw, no one more plainly, the course that mere consulting of his own safety would recommend. "Suppose," he says, in his Buffalo speech—"suppose I had taken such a course. How could I be blamed for it? Was I not a Northern man? Did I not know Massachusetts feelings and prejudices? But what of that? I am an American. I was made a whole man, and I did not mean to make myself half a one."

But Webster's high fidelity was but half, it was hardly half, of the great round of his patriotism. To be hopeful is, sometimes, almost more than to be simply true. And the hope that, through every extreme of her fortune, Webster held on behalf of his country, was, in 1850, perhaps greater and more difficult patriotism than was his mere stark fidelity. He spoke in the Senate to save his country, and then he resolved upon the Herculean labor of persuading his countrymen to let their country be saved. He accomplished both tasks, but he perished in accomplishing them. He

faced two perils and did not blench. He faced the peril of being rejected politically, as he was, and he faced the peril of being written into literature, as he has been, a traitor to liberty. It was a vast effort of patriotism to be proposed to a man, every pulse of whose blood beat for humanity and for freedom, that, for the sake of his country, he should consent to appear in the vivid but wronging literary portraiture of his time, a recreant to the cause of freedom, and a traitor to the cause of humanity. This effort of patriotism, Webster recognized as proposed to himself—proposed, while it was yet uncertain whether there would be a future generation of his countrymen to redress his outraged fame. But Webster did not shrink. Theodore Parker notes it of Webster, that, on the morning of the seventh of March, he said to a fellow-senator, "I have my doubts that the speech I am going to make will ruin me." To a clergyman, afterward, he said, "It seemed to me, at the time, that the country demanded a human victim, and I saw no reason why the victim should not be myself." Mr. Webster's manner evinced such sincerity and deep patriotic disinterestedness, that he [the clergyman] was moved to tears, which do not cease to start at every recollection of the interview.*

I have seemed to concede that Daniel Webster indulged the desire to be President. It is probably true that he did. From the principles of human nature in general, it is safe to conclude, also, that his motives in the desire were not entirely unselfish. Beyond doubt, he was ambitious. But to doubt, on the other hand, that his motives, even in his ambition, were to a still greater degree unselfish, than selfish, would be blindness to the true character of Daniel Webster, as an individual man. It was his instinct and his habit to identify himself with his country; but this does not mean that he identified his country with himself. He desired, first, to make his country ever more glorious than she was, and, secondary, subordinate, inseparable, was his desire to be glorified himself in his country. His patriotism may not have been perfectly pure. It probably was not. But that a purer patriotism than Daniel Webster's ever burned in any human breast, it would be venturesome to maintain. He had an extraordinary travailing sense of vicarious responsibility on behalf of his country —its good behavior, and its permanent well-being. He thought that he could serve her, and he wanted to serve her. To serve her most effectually, place was much. Men say, he ought to have been satisfied. It was more to be Webster than it was to be President. This is true. Webster could magnify the office of President, far beyond the measure to which the office of President could magnify him. And, if all were now said, then, undoubtedly, Webster's wish to be President would have to be counted a weakness—weakness venial, indeed, but weakness still. But all is not said. To be President would not have made Webster a greater patriot, a greater statesman, a greater orator, than he already was; but it would have enabled him to confer immensely greater benefits upon his country.

* Note to Dr. Nehemiah Adams's Funeral Discourse.

It is a mistake, and a mischievous mistake, to suppose that we lose nothing, as a nation, by having a vulgar man, or an indifferent man, or, indeed, any man less good than the best, for our President. The Presidency is not merely a name, it is a thing. It is, in fact, as well as in name, the chief place of power and service at the disposal of the American people. The President's character determines the tone of his whole Administration. The Cabinet are his choice and his appointment. Directly, or indirectly, every department of affairs, from the highest official to the humblest, feels the hand of the President. It is an incalculable misfortune to the nation to elect an inferior man to the place. Imagine the difference that it might have made to this people, if Webster had survived to be President, in the place of Franklin Pierce. It was, therefore, no baseness; it was not, necessarily, even a mere weakness; it may have been chiefly, I believe it was chiefly, true patriotism in Daniel Webster, to desire to be President. A man may possibly be timid and selfish, as much as modest, in abdicating, or declining, or avoiding, arduous responsibility. On the other hand, a man may possibly be unselfish and generous, even more than ambitious and greedy, in seeking responsible place. There was no other position possible to Daniel Webster, in which he could be so serviceable to the country, as in the position of President. So much power, of so many kinds, belongs to the President apart from the man, that cannot belong to the man apart from the President, that Webster, who had known Presidents and who knew himself, may well be forgiven for wishing that he could work on behalf of his country with the long leverage in his favor that the chief magistracy of the republic, playing on the whole stability of the State for its fulcrum, would have given him.

It must, of course, remain always a somewhat barren matter of mere differing opinion, as to what motives, how mingled, actuated Webster's public life. It is difficult, however, and it would seem not very magnanimous to read the record of how he acted, both in the popular eye and in the eye of confidential friendship, during forty conspicuous and strenuous years, and believe that he was other than patriotic. More difficult still—one might confidently challenge the generous and enlightened young American public of to-day, to try the experiment—more difficult still it would prove, to begin, without prepossession, and read the printed volumes of his eloquence, and not take the irresistible impression, that here spoke a man to whom sordid aims were strange, abhorrent, impossible. Let us do as Webster himself did, when any one spoke slightingly in his presence of John Milton's poetry. He would take down "Paradise Lost," and read a passage of the poem aloud. If they cry down Daniel Webster to you, read him, and say, "This man, not a patriot? *Credat Judæus!*" Webster's printed works are the sufficient vindication of the patriotism of Webster.

If we have now saved to ourselves the right to hold by Daniel Webster as, upon the whole, an honest, a consistent, and a patriotic man,

it is of less consequence that we make him out also a wise statesman. But that question comes next in order, forming our fourth topic.

Did Webster act wisely?

Wisdom consists, first, in choosing good ends, and then in seeking those ends by good means. The end that Webster chose was the preservation of the Union. Was this a good end for American statesmanship? If it was not, then certainly Webster failed as a statesman; for, to the preservation of the Union he dedicated and devoted his public life.

It has sometimes been urged against the statesmanlike genius and achievement of Webster, that he never originated any great measures of state. This is true, I suppose. But thence to conclude that Webster was not a great statesman, would be seriously to mistake the true function of statesmanship. Statesmanship is not innovation—it is conservation. The statesman watches the progress of public opinion, and adopts ideas into his system as fast as they are ripe and fit to be conserved. If he stimulates progress, otherwise than by the prompt, but not too prompt, recognition and adoption of the safe results of progress accomplished, he ceases, so far, to be a statesman, and becomes a reformer. But the reformer is out of place, in the place of the statesman. The Union of these American States continued to be, during the whole of Webster's career, a great good not yet certainly assured. Besides this, it was a good, such, in its nature, as always to be somewhat remote from the popular appreciation. It was, at once, a great education to affairs, a valuable lesson in political virtue (and political virtue in the last analysis is perhaps nothing more nor less than self-control), when the American community should be trained to perceive the inestimable worth to them, in every way, of their Federal Union. To make this perception a national tradition, required time. Mere continuance of the government was an indispensable condition. A half century, a decade of years, even a single year, was an incalculable gain to the cause of the Union. The people of the States, governments and peoples abroad must become familiar with the Union as a fact. In comparison with this, everything else in American politics was insignificant. While inventive and enterprising statesmen in her councils were devising their experiments in policy, or were using the strength yet untried of the State as a purchase for the accomplishment of moral reforms, the State itself might crumble and dissolve, and disappear, under the stress, like a fulcrum of sand. If the people, if statesmen themselves, did not see this, why, then, the problem of true statesmanship for America did not therefore become the less necessary, but only the more difficult, to be solved.

Webster, from his youth, took in the situation with something of the ken of a prophet. More. He bore his country on his conscience and his heart, in something of the spirit of a father. His hope and his fear for the republic were, both of them, in the highest degree, helpful to save it. If his fear had not been balanced by his hope, he would have been an augur of ill, contributing all the time to accomplish his own augury, by de-

pressing the spirit of his countrymen. If his hope had not been balanced by his fear, he would have hurried the country on to its destiny, before its destiny was ready for it, in the womb of time. This was Seward's mistake. Seward seemed not to lack breadth of view and reach of foresight. But his temperament was too sanguine. He trusted too much and did not sufficiently provide. He was not, like Sumner, chiefly a reformer. But he introduced the unmeasured and scarce measurable forces of reform into politics before the time. He should have waited for the results of reform, finished and safe, and not have ventured to harness the unbridled forces of reform, restive, and heady, and plunging, to the delicately balanced and already swaying political car. Sumner sought moral ends by political means. Seward sought political ends by moral means. Both men erred. Seward erred by too much buoyancy of political hope, unballasted with the grave sense of political responsibility. "Be it known, then," said Seward, in that large oracular way which he affected, speaking in the Senate, on the occasion of Clay's death, in 1852—"be it known, then, and I am sure that history will confirm the instruction, that Conservatism was the interest of the nation and the responsibility of its rulers, during the period in which he [Clay] flourished." Seward was right in this. He was wrong only in assuming that the period of just Conservatism in American politics was over. The State was not long enough out of its gristle, to go safely through its struggle with the hydra.

Webster, accordingly, sought to establish the Union by keeping the Union established. It needed to grow strong by growing old. Time would compact it, if it would only stand, to be compacted by time. Webster's end was to preserve the Union. His means was, to avert the strain that might rend it. If the strain could not be averted, then he at least would postpone the strain. To postpone it, might be to avert it. This was Webster's statesmanship—its end, and its means. A crisis threatened in 1830, again in 1832, once more in 1850, and Webster, each time, effected a postponement. Two more postponements, of like length with the last, would probably have averted the crisis altogether. It was not to be, but, meantime, the republic had grown strong enough to stand the inevitable strain. Then

> Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
> Dardaniæ

So it looked, but her strength was proportioned to her days, and Dardania survived.

In 1856, Mr. T. W. Higginson headed the list of signatures to a call for a convention to assemble at Worcester, with the ostensible object of considering measures for the dissolution of the Union.† The motives of the call, no doubt, were conscientious. The subscribers "believed the existing Union to be a failure." It was a movement in the interest of

† Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker, vol. ii., pp. 191, ff.

"humanity" rather than of patriotism—humanity under the form of abolition, a cause, however, it is to be presumed, sincerely regarded by the signers, as being also, at the moment, the true paramount moral and political interest of the country. Still, the object was probably "humanitarian" directly and indirectly patriotic. It is not unlikely, however, that, underneath the ostensible object of the movement was concealed a purpose, not dishonorable though concealed, to strengthen the radical and progressive component, judged by the movers to be disproportionately feeble, in the polygon of political forces at that time acting upon the American community. The sentiment of union, it may be supposed, was calculated by these gentlemen to be stable enough to bear being made the point of support for a pry to help launch the cause of abolition, still hanging, and too long, in the ways. I beg to disclaim imputing, by conjecture, any motives not consistent with honesty on the part of the signers to this call. The motive that I have ventured to guess for them, is one that a philanthropic and, subordinately, patriotic man need not be ashmed to confess. It was consistent with honor, if it did violate wisdom. However these things may be, Theodore Parker addressed, on this occasion, to Mr. Higginson a letter, frankly disavowing any wish on his part to see the Union dissolved. He used a homely but apt illustration, to set forth what he believed would unquestionably be the result of a conflict, if a conflict should occur, between the North and the South. The North, he said in substance, was a steer that weighed seventeen millions, and was weak only in the head and neck. The South, on the contrary, while strong in these parts, was weak in the whole hind-quarters, weighing but eleven millions in all. If the two steers should lock horns, it was but a question of avoirdupois which steer went into the ditch.

In this rustic comparison, though its author was not statesman to see it, lay the whole secret of wise statesmanship respecting the sectional questions in difference between the North and the South. The disparity of strength between the two sections was daily increasing. The census was in the way of settling the dispute by mere peaceful count of polls and dollars. The time was near when a shock of arms, should one occur, between the North and the South, would be so inevitably and so obviously certain in its issue, that a shock, provoked by the weaker party, would never take place. The South saw this, and the hotter-spirited among her sons were eager to precipitate a decision. Wise statesmen and patient patriots had but to wait. In 1850 they waited. Northern extremists and Southern extremists were equally disappointed. The compromises of that year disgusted both parties alike. So affronted were the extreme party at the South, that the Senators of several Southern States (including Virginia) issued a solemn protest, which they sought, though vainly, to have spread out at large on the records of the Senate, inveighing against the injustice to the slave-holding interest involved in the Compromise measures. When the extremists in both parties concerned in a measure of mutual settlement

are dissatisfied together, it is pretty good evidence that neither party has got all the advantage.

There is another aspect of the case, not less important than the one already presented. Not only was the North, or, to name the cause in a way more accordant with the Websterian spirit, not only was Freedom, gaining every moment in ascendency of numbers and strength over Slavery, but, what was of at least equal consequence, Freedom was every moment gaining in unanimity and steadiness of purpose. In 1850, notwithstanding that the argument of avoirdupois was so clearly in favor of Freedom, still that apparent advantage was not quite to be trusted. Public opinion at the North was not yet solid and decisive enough for Freedom. An attempt to use the majority would result in dissolving the majority. There can be no reasonable doubt that a conflict joined in 1850 would have issued in immeasurable disaster, if not in irretrievable ruin, to the cause alike of Union, of Freedom, and of Civilization. This, for yet another reason than the reasons thus far indicated.

In an issue joined on the basis of opposition from the North to the Compromise measures of 1850, Freedom would have suffered the incalculable disadvantage of being, technically and substantially, in the wrong. There were hundreds and hundreds of thousands of the best and most patriotic citizens of the North who could never have been brought to support, by war, a construction of the Constitution so palpably against justice and common sense as that construction would be which should deny to the South the right of recovering fugitive slaves. The men of 1861 saw this plainly enough, and hence those joint resolutions, repetitiously, solicitously, and even almost humbly, acknowledging this constitutional right of the South, which, in specimen at least, my readers have had the opportunity to see. The revolt against coercion would have been almost as wide-spread at the North as at the South, if in 1850 the Government had attempted coercion, on the principle of refusing to the slave-holding States the measure of justice contained in the compromises of that year. Disunion and anarchy, and a cycle of unimaginably disastrous history, would have been the certain result.

But not only was it of the utmost moment to the best cause that the arbitrament of arms should be postponed till the right side was surely the superior, and till the right side was also surely and clearly the right; but it was of the utmost moment, besides, that the shock of violent conflict should, if possible, be wholly and ultimately avoided and averted. Peace without war was inestimably more precious than peace after war, won by means of war. There never was a case in which harmony was so needful to harmony. It would have been almost infinitely better for all of us that one section should never find out by experiment its own superior or its own inferior strength. The mischiefs of such a consciousness, mutually rife between the two sections, were already great enough, before they had embodied and obtruded themselves in a history of brute triumph on the one

side, and of grinding discomfiture on the other, that henceforward could not be ignored. Those mischiefs, once so illustrated, became a long entail of sequel and tradition, the end and oblivion of which it was, and it is, impossible to forsee. The memory and example will, indeed, always act as a terror to intimidate rebellion; but the same influence will, always, too, act as a damp to unsolder harmony, and to cool the ardors of patriotism. Did not the statesmanship of Webster and Clay do wisely, to seek the continuous preservation of the Union, rather than to risk its restoration after the chances of disruption by war?

As to Webster's correctness of view respecting the necessity of applying the Wilmot Proviso to New Mexico and Utah, a word will suffice. Ten peaceful years ensued after the organization of these Territories, during which time they were without legal protection against slavery. Within those peaceful years the population of New Mexico advanced from 0.29 (persons to a square mile) in 1850, to 0.36 in 1860. During the same period Texas advanced from 0.77 to 2.20. The advance here credited to New Mexico, small as it may appear, appears, nevertheless, greater than it actually was. For, meantime, Colorado and Arizona had been set off from her territory, and their percentage of increase was yet smaller than hers. Mr. C. F. Adams, accordingly, in 1861, was quite warranted in treating the whole question of possible future slavery in New Mexico, to use his own term, as purely an "abstraction." He said that more than ten years' governmental care of the "bantling" had resulted in introducing only twenty-two slaves, of whom ten were non-residents, into the Territory. Webster, then, and Mr. Adams thought alike on this subject. The only difference is, that Webster was ten years earlier in expressing his opinion. Why, pray should Webster alone continue to be blamed? Why, indeed, should he be blamed at all?

But let Webster have been thus conscientious, consistent, patriotic, wise, as you maintain, does it follow that he was morally right? Is there not an absolute right and wrong in the world? And cannot a man find something better worth swearing his faith to than country? Is not humanity more than native land? Is not justice greater than statesmanship? We thus come to our final topic, the question,

Did Webster act *right?*

Webster thought that all the chief goods to us as a nation were best obtainable through the Union. With the Union and Constitution established and preserved, he thought that every other political blessing was possible. He foresaw Freedom prevalent at last throughout the nation as the peaceful result of the operation of moral forces. Webster never thought otherwise than that slavery was a moral, political, social and economical evil. He never expected otherwise than that slavery would finally disappear from the country. He knew—as who that was exempt from the moral and intellectual obliquity incident to practical complication with slavery could fail to know?—that the permanent union of free States with

slave States was impossible. Such a union was like the binding together of the living and the dead. But it was evident enough that the forces of life were swiftly and surely gaining the ascendant over the forces of death. Freedom was winning and slavery was losing every day. And freedom was winning more, as slavery was also losing more, while the Union subsisted, than could be the case on either side if the Union should cease. To break up the Union would weaken freedom, and would strengthen slavery. The political Abolitionists, of whom Sumner may, without injustice, be named as representative, seemed to have won a great triumph for their cause, when emancipation was proclaimed and effected. But observe the conditions under which that apparent triumph was won. It was won solely through the force and persistency of the sentiment of union, which Daniel Webster, by eminence, had succeeded in instilling into the understanding, and conscience, and heart of the American people. Without that sentiment of union, the decree of emancipation could never have been issued, or, issued, must, perforce, have remained *brutum fulmen*—or, less respectable still, the empty lightning of ridiculous demonstration, without the accompanying thunderbolt of even a formidable attempt at practical enforcement. Webster's statesmanship provided the fulcrum which gave to Sumner's reformatory force all the leverage that it had for exerting itself to effect the overthrow of slavery. If the fulcrum planted by Webster had not stood, Sumner's strength would have gone, simply and only, to split the Union, and not in the least to unsettle slavery. Indeed, with the Union divided, slavery would have been necessarily more cruel, more resistant, and more stable than before. The decree of emancipation, and the fact of emancipation, often mistakenly credited to the Abolitionists, were far more truly the work of Webster, than the work of the antislavery agitators. Emancipation was an incident of the war for the *Union*, as emancipation was sure, sooner or later, to have been a peaceful fruit of union, if the war had been averted.

But union, rather than abolition, was the true chief moral, as well as political good of this nation, for reasons that may be briefly thus summarized. Union was the means to ultimate abolition, while political abolition was the means to ultimate and permanent disunion. If disunion could have been secured by any peaceful measures, slavery in the South would have remained intact, and have been no less alert and jealous in self-defense than before. The two separated republics, supposing two republics to have been formed, would have remained in the same local juxtaposition. Slaves would have been no less likely to attempt escape. Attempt at recovery would have been as inevitable. There would have been an undiminished disposition to resist recapture. The result would have been this inexorable alternative, either, first, a treaty stipulation between the two republics for extradition of fugitive slaves, and so a fugitive slave law in effect, like that which even liberty-loving England, through her Admiralty Court, administers to this day; or, secondly, border incursions, and,

by consequence, a chronic state of war. The first branch of the alternative would be no gain for freedom, and the second branch would involve consequences of bane to every conceivable human interest, not to be contemplated as having been escaped, without an outcry of thankfulness; not to be contemplated as imminent, without a shudder of horror.

Such considerations as these compel us to decide that the course which Webster pursued in 1850 was, in the largest view, not merely wise, but right—that is, agreeable to the highest and widest morality.

Respecting, then, Webster's course of public conduct in the matter of the compromises of 1850, as it is for this that he still chiefly suffers in the popular esteem, so for this, I fully believe, he deserves our unmingled admiration and gratitude. There was some palliation for injustice on the part of abolitionists toward Webster, at a time when they passionately believed that his vast influence was what chiefly obstructed the progress of their cause—as, no doubt it truly was what chiefly obstructed their mischosen pathway of progress for their cause. It was necessary, they instinctively felt, to destroy Webster's ascendancy over the judgement and conscience of the people, before they could hope effectively to further the ends which they honestly and ardently held to be first in importance for the good of humanity. In the passion of their conviction and zeal, they easily thought that Webster really was the criminal man that, accordingly, they loudly procloimed him to be.

But the fight now is fought, and the victory, somehow, has been won. In the truce of antislavery strife that has happily succeeded at last, and with us become, it may be trusted, a perpetual peace, it is no longer excusable if we let the unjust reproach against Webster grow traditional and inveterate.

But this cannot happen. Posterity, at least, will not suffer it. However minded still may be the new American nation that now is, the new American nation that is soon to be will surely do him justice. His own great words come back. They seem chosen for our needs in speaking of him. We give the phrase a forward aspect, and we say of Webster, The future, at least, is secure. For his renown, is it not of the treasures of the whole country? The tree sent its top high, it spread its branches wide, but it cannot fall, for it cast its roots deep. It sunk them clean through the globe. No storm, not of force to burst the orb, can overturn it. It certainly is not less safe to stand than is the republic itself. Perhaps it is safer.

What he spoke lives, while what was spoken against him perishes, and his own speech, in the end, will effectually defend him. Already the rage of defamation breaks and disperses itself, vainly beating against that monumental rock to his fame.

"Their surging charges foam themselves away."

When the storm has fully spent itself, when the fury is quite overpast, the

candid weather will quickly drink up the drench of mist and of cloud that still stains it. Then Webster's works will be seen, and the speech of the seventh of March among them, standing there, like Mont Blanc, severe and serene, to attest, "how silently!" but with none left to gainsay, the greatness of the man, the pureness of the patriot.

But thus far to anticipate, and not to anticipate farther, would be scarce half to have guessed the recompense of ackowledgement that surely awaits Daniel Webster. History will sit down by and by to meditate his words, and, wisely comparing events, make up her final award. She then will perceive and proclaim, that, not once, nor twice, in an hour of darkness for his country, this man, not merely in barren wish and endeavor, but in fruitful force and accomplishment as well, stood forth sole, or without rival eminent, vindicator and savior of the republic. She will see, and she will say, that, especially in 1850, while many clear and pure spirits were accepting, amid applause, the glorious bribe of instant enrollment among ostensible and confessed defenders of liberty, one spirit was found—a spirit of grave and majestic mold, capable of putting this brilliant lure aside, to choose, almost alone, amid obloquy, and scorn, and loss, a different bribe —a bribe which turned sternly toward its chooser an obverse of rejection for himself, but which bore, concealed from other, less deeply beholding eyes than his, a reverse of real eventual rescue for liberty, involved in necessary precedent redemption for his country. That chief selected spirit's name, history will write in the name of Daniel Webster. Nor will she omit to point out that, in thus choosing bravely for country, he did not less choose wisely for liberty.

But history will go farther. She will avouch that not even with death did Webster cease being savior to his country. It was Webster still, she will say, that saved us yet again in 1861. Illuminating her sober page with a picture of that sudden and splendid display of patriotism which followed Fort Sumter, she will write under the representation her legend and her signature, "This is Daniel Webster." I have pondered his words, she will say; I have studied his life, and this apparition is none other than he. Sleeping wakefully even in death for her sake, he hearkened to hear the call of his country. He heard it in the guns of Fort Sumter. Resurgent at the sound, that solemn figure once more, and now for the last and the sufficing occasion, re-appeared on the scene, standing visibly, during four perilous years, relieved, in colossal strength and repose, against her dark and troubled sky, the Jupiter Stator of his country.

For that magnificent popular enthusiasm for the Union—an enthusiasm, the like of which, for blended fury and intelligence enlisted on behalf of an idea, the world had never before beheld, this, as history will explain, was by no means the birth of a moment. Fort Sumter fired it, but it was otherwise fueled and prepared. Daniel Webster, by eminence, his whole life long had been continuously at work. Speech by speech, year after year, the great elemental process went on. These men might

scoff, and those men might jeer, but none the less, through jeer and scoff, the harried Titan kept steadily to his task. Three generations, at least, of his countrymen he impregnated, mind and conscience and heart, with the sentiment of devotion to the Union. This, in great part, accounts for the miracle of eighteen hundred sixty-one. Thus was engendered and stored in the American character the matchless spirit of patriotism which slept till Fort Sumter, but which, with Fort Sumter, flamed out in that sudden, that august, that awful illustration all over the loyal land. One flame—who forgets it?—one flame of indignation and wrath, like a joyful sword from its sheath, leaping forth, released at last, from the patient but passionate heart of the people! That monster Union meeting, for example, in New York City on the twentieth of April, filling Union Square from side to side, and from end to end, with swaying surges of people—what was it, history will inquire, but Daniel Webster, come again, in endlessly multiplied count, but in scarce augmented volume of personal power?

Such is certain to be the final sentence of history. And if history notes, as she will, that the generous desire of freedom for the slave—a desire bond of conscience before, in millions of hearts, but gloriously emancipate now, by the welcomed foretokenings of war—if history notes that this influence entered to heighten the noble passion of the hour, this influence, too, she will gratefully recognize to have been largely a fruit of the eloquence of Webster.

Should some share, perchance, of this confident prediction fail, history at least, must decide that, comprehensively surveyed in its relation to the whole of his own life, and in its relation to the life of the republic, Webster's part in the affairs of eighteen hundred fifty was the part of an honest, a consistent, a wise, and an upright patriot and statesman. With this measure of justice, let us make late haste to pacify now his indignant fame.

His tender, mighty heart—v.

What shall we say of this great man in the personal and private traits of his character? I should say of Mr. Webster that, if there were one single trait conspicuous in him and preeminent as compared with others who have made for themselves great names in history, it would be the abundant charity of his nature. He never assumed for himself in private intercourse, or in public speech, any superiority. He never tolerated in his presence, and he never practiced, either evil speech or evil surmise. His frown followed even their casual introduction about the table and in public discussions, and he never tolerated any confusion between intellectual dissection of an argument and moral inculpation of the reasoner."—WILLIAM M. EVARTS.

"He had accurate perceptions of the qualities and relations of things. He overvalued nothing that was common, and undervalued nothing that was useful, or even ornamental. His lands, his cattle and equipage, his dwelling, library and apparel, his letters, arguments and orations—everything that he had, everything that he made, everything that he did—were, as far as possible, fit, complete, perfect.

"He was * * * content with performing all practical duties, even in common affairs, in the best possible manner; and he never chafed under petty restraints from those above, nor malicious annoyances from those around him. If ever any man had intellectual sovereignty which could have excused a want of deference to human authority, or skepticism concerning that which was divine, he was such a one. Yet he was, nevertheless, unassuming and courteous, here and elsewhere, in the public councils; and there was, I think, never a time in his life when he was not an unquestioning believer in that religion which offers to the meek the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom.—WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

That genial warmth of vital temperament—xi

"After dinner, Mr. Webster would throw himself upon the sofa, and then was seen the truly electrical attraction of his character. Every person in the room was drawn immediately into his sphere. The children squeezing themselves into all possible places and postures upon the sofa, in order to be close to him; Mrs. Webster sitting by his side, and the friend in the house, or social visitor, only too happy to join in the circle. All this was not from invitation to the children; he did nothing to amuse them, he told them no stories; it was the irresistible attraction of his character, the charm of his illumined countenance, from which beamed indulgence and kindness to every one of his family. In the evening, if visitors came in, Mr. Webster was too much exhausted to take a very active part in conversation. He had done a large amount of work before others were awake in the morning."—MRS. E. BUCKMINSTER LEE, *(Private Correspondence, I.*, 443*)*.

—that affectionate heart, to kindred true—xi.

"It is the universal testimony that he gave to his parents, in largest measure, honor, love, obedience; that he eagerly appropriated the first means which he could command to relieve his father from the debts contracted to educate his brother and himself; that he selected his first place of professional practice that he might soothe the coming on of his old age; that all through life he neglected no occasion—sometimes when leaning on the arm of a friend, alone, with faltering voice, sometimes in the presence of great assemblies, where the tide of general emotion made it graceful—to express his 'affectionate veneration of him who reared and defended the log cabin in which his elder brothers and sisters were born, against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of seven years of revolutionary war, shrank from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a better condition than his own.'

"Equally beautiful was his love of all his kindred, and of all his friends. When I hear him accused of selfishness, and a cold, bad nature, I recall him lying sleepless all night, not without tears of boyhood, conferring with Ezekiel how the darling desire of both hearts should be compassed, and he, too, admitted to the precious privileges of education; courageously pleading the cause of both brothers in the morning; prevailing by the wise and discerning affection of the mother; suspending his studies of the law, and registering deeds and teaching school to earn the means for both, of availing themselves of the opportunity which the parental self-sacrifice had placed within their reach; loving him through life, mourning him when dead, with a love and sorrow very wonderful, passing the sorrow of woman; I recall the husband, the father of the living and of the early departed, the friend, the counsellor of many years, and my heart grows too full and liquid for the refutation of words.

"His affectionate nature, craving ever friendship, as well as the presence of kindred blood, diffused itself through all his private life, gave sincerity to all his hospitalities, kindness to his eye, warmth to the pressure of his hand; made his greatness and genius unbend themselves to the playfulness of childhood, flowed out in graceful memories indulged of the past or the dead, of incidents when life was young and promised to be happy,—gave generous sketches of his rivals,—the high contention now hidden by the handful of earth,—hours passed fifty years ago with great authors, recalled for the vernal emotions which then they made to live and revel in the soul. And from these conversations of friendship, no man—no man, old or young—went away to remember one word of profaneness, one allusion of indelicacy, one impure thought, one unbelieving suggestion, one doubt cast on the reality of virtue, of patriotism, of enthusiasm, of the progress of man,—one doubt cast on righteousness, or temperance, or judgment to come."—RUFUS CHOATE.

During the famous log-cabin Presidential canvass of 1840, Webster, in a speech addressed to a vast concourse of people at Saratoga Springs, made the following allusion to his father and to the circumstances of his own early life:

"It did not happen to me to be born in a log cabin; but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin, raised amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early that, when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney, and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the touching narratives and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living; and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if I ever fail in affectionate veneration for him who reared it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of a seven years' revolutionary war, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name and the name of my posterity be blotted for ever from the memory of mankind!"

—*Works*, Vol. II, p. 30.

It will add nothing to the information, as to facts, already conveyed, but it will throw a light on the peculiar, impressive way, often quasi-poetic, Webster had of saying common things, without seeming at all to depart from becoming simplicity, if I subjoin the following statement from the fragment of autobiography published in the volumes of his Private Correspondence. This is a charming bit of composition, such as excites unavailing regret that we have so little of it.:

"My father joined this enterprise, [an enterprise of settlement in the unsubdued forest,] and about 1764, the exact date is not before me, pushed into the wilderness. He had the discretion to take a wife along with him, intending whatever else he might want, at least not to lack good company. The party *travelled out the road*, or path, for it was no better, somewhere about Concord or Boscawen; and they were obliged to make their way, not finding one, to their destined places of habitation. My father *lapped on*, a little beyond any other comer, and when he had built his log cabin, and lighted his fire, his smoke ascended nearer to the North Star than that of any other of his Majesty's New England subjects. His nearest civilized neighbor on the north, was at Montreal."

—*Private Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 5.

Him his heroic sire, etc., p. 3.—"In this period [the period of childhood], also, we are to find the early influences which gave a peculiar tinge and fervor to his patriotic feelings—feelings that always carried his love of country, by emotions, whose sources lay deep in an emotional nature, to the history of what had been done and suffered in order to make a country. For we are to remember that at his paternal fireside sat and talked, in the long winter evenings, one who had been an actor, first in the great war by which our fathers helped the crown of England to extinguish the power of France on this continent, and then in that other war for independence, by which the unrequited and misgoverned provinces severed themselves from the parent State. Whoever seeks to know what it was in the formation of the character of Daniel Webster that gave such a glow to the eloquence, and such a breadth to the patriotism of his after-years, whenever and wherever American history connected itself with American nationality, must go back to that fireside, and listen in imagination to the tales which his young heart drank from his father's lips."

—*Curtis's Life of Daniel Webster, Vol. I, p.* 12.

Bred in his father's simple school severe, etc, p. 4.—In a long letter, full of the writer's private character, written May 3, 1846, from Franklin, N. H., the home of his boyhood, to Mr. Blatchford, a valued friend, Webster, among other matters of much biographical interest, alludes as follows to his kindred:

"Looking out at the east windows at this moment, (2 P. M.) with a beautiful sun just breaking out, my eye sweeps a rich and level field of one hundred acres. At the end of it, a third of a mile off, I see plain marble gravestones, designating the places where repose my father, my mother, my brother Joseph, and my sisters Mehitable, Abigail, and Sarah, good Scripture names, inherited from their Puritan ancestors.

"My father, Ebenezer Webster! born at Kingston, in the lower part of the State, in 1739, and the handsomest man I ever saw, except my brother Ezekiel, who appeared to me, and so does he now seem to me, the very finest human form that ever I laid eyes on. I saw him in his coffin, a white forehead, a tinged cheek, a complexion as clear as heavenly light! But where am I straying? The grave has closed upon him, as it has on all my brothers and sisters. We shall soon be all together. But this is melancholy, and I leave it. Dear, dear kindred blood, how I love you all!

"This fair field is before me, I could see a lamb on any part of it. I have ploughed it, and raked it, and hoed it, but I never mowed it. Somehow I could never learn to hang a scythe! I had not wit enough. My brother Joe used to say that my father sent me to college in order to make me equal to the rest of the children!

"Of a hot day in July, it must have been in one of the last years of Washington's administration, I was making hay with my father, just where I now see rose a remaining elm tree. About the middle of the afternoon, the Honorable Abiel Foster, M. C., who lived in Canterbury, six miles off, called

at the house, and came into the field to see my father. He was a worthy man, college learned, and had been a minister, but was not a person of any considerable natural power. My father was his friend and supporter. He talked a while in the field, and went on his way. When he was gone, my father called me to him, and we sat down beneath the elm, on a hay-cock. He said: 'My son, that is a worthy man, he is a member of Congress, he goes to Philadelphia, and gets six dollars a day, while I toil here. It is because he had an education, which I never had. If I had had his early education, I should have been in Philadelphia in his place. I came near it as it was, but I missed it, and now I must work here.' 'My dear father,' said I, 'you shall not work. Brother and I will work for you, and wear our hands out, and you shall rest.' And I remember to have cried, and I cry now at the recollection. * *

"My father died in April, 1806. I neither left him nor forsook him. My opening an office at Boscawen, was that I might be near him. I closed his eyes in this very house. He died at sixty-seven years of age, after a life of exertion, toil, and exposure; a private soldier, an officer, a legislator, a judge, everything that a man could be, to whom learning never had disclosed her 'ample page.'

"My first speech at the bar was made when he was on the bench. He never heard me a second time. He had in him what I collect to have been the character of some of the old Puritans. He was deeply religious, but not sour. On the contrary, good-humored, facetious, showing even in his age, with a contagious laugh, teeth all as white as alabaster, gentle, soft, playful, and yet having a heart in him that he seemed to have borrowed from a lion. He could frown; a frown it was; but cheerfulness, good-humor, and smiles composed his most usual aspect."

—*Private Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 228–29.

Simple and pure, * * *
Even to the end, thy grave great son remaincd—xi.

My Dear Old Classmate, Roommate and Friend:—It gives me very true pleasure to hear from you, aud to learn that you are well. Years have not abated my affectionate regard. We have been boys together, and men together, and now, are growing old together; but you always occupy the same place in my remembrance and good wishes. You are still James Hervey Bingham, with your old bass-viol, with "Laus Deo" painted upon it; I hope you have it yet; and I am the same Daniel Webster, whom you have known at Exeter, at Lempster, at Charlestown, at Salisbury, at Alstead, at Portsmouth, Claremont, Boston and Washington. And now, my dear friend, after this retrospective glimpse, let me say that I know nothing of those who are coming into power; that I expect to possess no particular influence or association with them; but that, if any occasion arises in which I can be useful to you, you can command my most attentive services.

Will you please give my love to a lady, whom I had once the honor of knowing as Miss Charlotte Kent? Daniel Webster.

Washington, February 5th, 1849.

In 1851, a schoolmaster of his boyhood addressed a letter to Mr. Webster about the times of old, which drew forth the following reply, containing a bank-bill for fifty dollars, more, probably, than the old gentleman ever received for a winter's teaching in "New Salisbury:"

WASHINGTON, February 26, 1851.

MASTER TAPPAN: I thank you for your letter, and am rejoiced to know that you are among the living. I remember you perfectly well as a teacher of my infant years. I suppose my mother must have taught me to read very early, as I have never been able to recollect the time when I could not read the Bible. I think Master Chase was my earliest schoolmaster, probably when I was three or four years old. Then came Master Tappan. You boarded at our house, and sometimes, I think, in the family of Mr. Benjamin Sanborn, our neighbor, the lame man. Most of those whom you knew in "New Salisbury" have gone to their graves. You have indeed lived a checkered life. I hope you have been able to bear prosperity with meekness, and adversity with patience. These things are all ordered for us far better than we could order them for ourselves. We may pray for our daily bread; we may pray for the forgiveness of sins; we may pray to be kept from temptation, and that the kingdom of God may come, in us, and in all men, and his will everywhere be done. Beyond this we hardly know for what good to supplicate the divine mercy. Our heavenly Father knoweth what we have need of better than we know ourselves, and we are sure that his eye and his loving-kindness are upon us and around us every moment.

I thank you again, my good old schoolmaster, for your kind letter, which has awakened many sleeping recollections; and, with all good wishes, I remain, your friend and pupil,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

[Here is another and later letter from Mr. Webster to the same old schoolmaster, also enclosing a generous remittance of money:]

BOSTON, July 20, 1852.

MASTER TAPPAN: I learn with much pleasure, through the public press, that you continue to enjoy life, with mental faculties bright and vivid, although you have arrived at a very advanced age, and are somewhat infirm. I came to-day from the very spot in which you taught me; and to me a most delightful spot it is. The river and the hills are as beautiful as ever, but the graves of my father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and early friends, gave it to me something of the appearance of a city of the dead. But let me not repine. You have lived long, and my life is already not short, and we have both much to be thankful for. Two or three persons are yet living who like myself were brought up *sub tua ferula*. They remember "Master Tappan."

And now, my good old master, receive a renewed tribute of

affectionate regard from your grateful pupil, with his wishes and prayers for your happiness in all that remains to you in this life, and more especially for your participation hereafter in the durable riches of righteousness. DANIEL WEBSTER.

—*Lanman's Private Life of Daniel Webster.*

Late, but full-voiced and penitent, above
His dust.—xiv.

"I have, learned by evidence the most direct and satisfactory, that in the last months of his life, the whole affectionateness of his nature; his consideration of others; his gentleness; his desire to make them happy and to see them happy, seemed to come out in more and more beautiful and habitual expression than ever before. The long days' public tasks were felt to be done; the cares, the uncertainties, the mental conflicts of high place, were ended; and he came home to recover himself for the few years which he still might expect would be his before he would go hence to be here no more. And there, I am assured and fully believe, no unbecoming regrets pursued him; no discontent, as for injustice suffered or expectations unfulfilled; no self-reproach for anything done or anything omitted by himself; no irritation, no peevishness, unworthy of his noble nature; but instead, love and hope for his country, when she became the subject of conversation; and for all around him, the dearest and most indifferent, for all breathing things about him, the overflow of the kindest heart growing in gentleness and benevolence; paternal, patriarchal affections, seeming to become more natural, warm, and communicative every hour. Softer and yet brighter grew the tints on the sky of parting day; and the last lingering rays, more even than the glories of the noon, announced how divine was the source from which they proceeded; how incapable to be quenched; how certain to rise on a morning which no night should follow. Such a character was made to be loved. It was loved. Those who knew and saw it in its hour of calm—those who could repose on that soft green—loved him. His plain neighbors loved him; and one said, when he was laid in his grave, 'How lonesome the world seems!' Educated young men loved him. The ministers of the gospel, the general intelligence of the country, the masses afar off, loved him. True, they had not found in his speeches, read by millions, so much adulation of the people; so much of the music which robs the public reason of itself; so many phrases of philanthropy; and some had told them he was lofty and cold,—solitary in his greatness; but every year they came nearer and nearer to him, and as they came nearer, they loved him better; they heard how tender the son had been, the husband, the brother, the friend, and neighbor, that he was plain, simple, natural, generous, hospitable,—the heart larger than the brain; that he loved little children, and reverenced God, the Scriptures, the Sabbath-day, the Constitution, and the law,—and their hearts clave unto him."—RUFUS CHOATE.

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Reverent toward God—iv.

An acquaintance of more than twenty-five years has enabled me to form some just idea of the departed. I have always regarded him as a Christian man, and the fact is singular, though melancholy, that many who were his malignant revilers in life, acknowledged his excellence at death. I rest my cheerful conviction of his piety upon personal knowledge. I fully unite with the Rev. Mr. Alden, in his opinion expressed in his funeral oration, that the delineation which Mr. Webster gave of one of his early and noble compeers "could never have been written, except from an experimental acquaintance with that which he holds up as the chief excellence of his friend."

Such a man could not be reckless or thoughtless, and they who knew him best, knew that God was in all his thoughts; the God of nature in his works filling him with the loftiest admiration, the God of Providence ordering all his daily steps, and the God of grace speaking to him in the volume of a father's love.

Many years ago—1834—in passing through the Sound, we occupied the captain's stateroom. At night Mr. Webster took up my Bible and read the 23d Psalm, and then made some fine remarks upon the character of David, observing that the varied experience of David as a shepherd boy—a king, victorious and vanquished, had made him acquainted with all the diversified feelings of human nature; and had thus qualified him to be the chorister of the church in all future ages. After this, he asked me to commend ourselves to God, remarking that none needed prayer more than the "wayfaring man." That evening I asked Mr. Webster if his religious views were those of the Orthodox Congregationalists, with whom I had heard that he had united in early life. "Yes," he said, "he thought that he had never changed his religious opinions; that he regarded Jonathan Edwards as bearing the stamp of truth as nearly as any mere human writer." He spoke of his History of Redemption as having greatly interested him, and added, "but I prefer to find truth as it is conveyed to us in the Word, without system, yet so clear and lucid." In regard to the atonement, he expressed the most abiding confidence, observing that it seemed to him the great peculiarity of the Gospel, to deny which was to reduce it to a level with other systems of religion. He observed that he had "no taste for metaphysical refinement in theology, and preferred plain statements of truth." He thought the pulpit had much to answer for in producing difference of opinion among Christians, and expressed his belief that the best and safest way to oppose all sorts of error was the plain enunciation of the truth. In this conversation I was much impressed with the remark, "I take the Bible to be inspired, and it must not be treated as though it merely *contained* a revelation; *it is a revelation.*"

"You ministers make a great mistake in not dwelling more upon the great *facts* of Christianity. They are the foundations of the system, and there is a power connected with their statement. It seems to me that Peter and Paul understood this. Plain preaching is what we all want, and as much illustration as you can bring up. I once heard Dr. Beecher, in Hanover street, Boston, talk for an hour on God's law, in its application to the heart and life; he did it, in my idea of good preaching." * * *

Last February I dined with Mr. Webster in New York, upon the Sabbath day. He had been hearing Dr. Hawks, and spoke in commendation of the earnestness of the discourse, and pointing across the Park to the Brick Church, said, "There I always hear capital sermons from Dr. Spring—always full of strong sense and simple piety."—REV. J. A. CHOULES, D. D.

Greater—for good and great—ii.

By way of showing the character of some of his fees while practicing law at Portsmouth, the following incident is worth recording: One of his clients, after gaining a certain suit, found himself unable to raise the necessary funds to pay his lawyer, and therefore insisted upon deeding to him a piece of land in a neighboring county. And so the matter rested for many years. Happening to be on a visit to this county at a subsequent period, he hunted out this land, and found an old woman living upon it alone, in an old house situated among rocks. He questioned the woman about the farm, and learned that it was the property of a lawyer named Webster, and that she was daily expecting him to come on and turn her out of doors. Whereupon he made himself known as the proprietor, gave her a word of consolation, with a present of fifty dollars, broke bread with her at her humble board, and took his departure. From that time to the present the place has been known as "Webster's Farm," and it is believed that up to the day of his death the idea of this possession had never entered his mind.—CHARLES LANMAN.

It was generally admitted before the death of Mr. Webster that he was the foremost lawyer, statesman, diplomatist, and orator in the land. But the truth is, Daniel Webster, in the judgment of those who knew him best, was as good as he was great. Nor was he a mere theorist in religion. He was a practical Christian, eminently thoughtful upon God, upon His works, and His word; and the clergyman whose preaching and life met the approval of his judgment and conscience might feel quite sure that he was doing the work of his Master.

A gentleman who was present on one occasion at a dinner party at the Astor House, given to a few of Mr. Webster's New York friends, relates an incident which took place at the table, in which Mr. Webster earnestly avowed his deep religious convictions. It was when he was Secretary of State.

"There were twenty or so at the table. Mr. Webster seemed wearied by his journey, and speaking but little, if at all, plunged into a darksome sort of reverie, not well calculated to enliven his friends. This at length became so apparent, and the situation so unpleasant, that one of the company urged upon a distinguished man present, a warm friend of Mr. Webster, to get him into conversation. It was thought he only needed to be jogged, to become as lively as they wished.

"This friend consented, and spoke to Mr. Webster, asking him some question that in ordinary circumstances and with ordinary men would have led to conversation; but it failed in the present case. The dark Secretary of State merely raised his head and answered simply, and crept into his cave again.

"Again the gentleman, frightened by his failure, was urged to renew the attempt to draw him out. He summoned courage and said to Mr. Webster:

"'Mr. Webster, I want you to tell me what was the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?

"Here was a thumper for him, and so everybody thought at the table. Mr. Webster slowly passed his hand over his forehead, and in a low tone said to a friend near him:

"'Is there any one here who does not know me?'

"'No, sir, they all know you—are all your friends.'

"Then he looked over the table, and you may well imagine how the tones of his voice would sound on such an occasion, giving answer to such a question.

"'The most important thought that ever occuiped my mind,' said he, 'was that of my individual responsibility to God!'—upon which, for twenty minutes, he spoke to them, and when he had finished he rose from the table and retired to his room.

The rest of the company, without a word, went into an adjoining parlor, and when they had gathered there some of them exclaimed, 'Who ever heard of anything like that?' What Mr. Webster said in advocacy of his sublime thought I do not know; no one ever repeated it, and I presume no one ever will."

"He was punctual in his attendance upon public worship, and ever opened his school with prayer. I never heard him use a profane word, and never saw him lose his temper."—Rev. Samuel Osgood to Professor Sanborn.—*Private Correspondence*, I., p. 58.

"He was never known to swear, or use any profanity of speech."—*Theodore Parker's Discourse of Webster.*

Considering by whose hand—ix.

A Boston Editor, under date near the time of Webster's death, 1852, says: "It was our fortune to pass several days at his home in Marshfield, some six or eight years ago, and well we remember one beautiful night when the heavens seemed to be studded with countless myriads of stars, that about nine o'clock in the evening we walked out, and he stood beneath the beautiful weeping elm which raises its majestic form within a few paces of his dwelling, and looking up through the leafy branches, he appeared for several minutes to be wrapped in deep thought, and at length, as if the scene, so soft and beautiful, had suggested the lines, he quoted certain verses of the Eighth Psalm, beginning with the words, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor,' etc. The deep, low tone in which he repeated these inspired words, and the rapt attention with which he gazed up through the branches of the elm, struck us with a feeling of awe and solemnity. We remained out beneath the tree for over an hour, and all the time he conversed about the Scriptures, which no man has studied with greater attention, and of which no man whom we ever saw knew so much or appeared to understand and appreciate so well."

"I recollect an incident which showed his scrupulous integrity. Mr. Thompson was postmaster in Salisbury, while I was in his office. In his absence I had the entire charge of it. One day I found a letter on the desk, addressed to his brother Ezekiel, at Hanover, marked as a double one. When I took it up to mail it, knowing the superscription to be Daniel's, I said to him, if you had not marked it double, I never should have suspected that it was so. 'I thought as much,' said he, 'but I remembered to have read somewhere, that it is better *to be* honest than to *appear* so.' At this time, two pieces of paper, however small, constituted a double letter, with double postage, which to Hanover was twenty cents, which he paid. The letter contained only a twenty dollar bill, he was sending to his brother. This was done when money was very scarce with him."—Mr. Abbot to Prof. Sanborn.

"The remarkable equanimity of temper which he ever manifested in school was a matter of common observation. Under all the vexations incident to such a school, not a frown was ever seen upon his brow. It was his invariable practice to open and close the school with extemporaneous prayer; and I shall never forget the solemnity of manner with which that duty was always performed."—Mr. Hill to Professor Sanborn.—*Private Correspondence*, I., p. 48.

DANIEL WEBSTER AND JOHN COLBY.

The year before Mr. Webster died, in the autumn of 1851, I was spending a few weeks with him at his place in Franklin. One pleasant morning he said to me:

"I am going to take a drive up to Andover, and I want you to go with me. * * * When we get into the wagon I will tell you whom I am going to see. * * * The horse was harnessed and we started off. As we rode along, Mr. Webster had a great many reminiscences called to mind by different objects that we passed; such a man used to live here, he would say, and such a man lived in such a house, and there I remember such a man lived, and here he used himself to live when a boy, and there he used to pitch quoits, and youthful Mr. Webster used to play with John Holden's boys. * * * After Mr. Webster had recited many pleasant incidents of this kind, he said:

"Now I will tell you the object of this trip to-day. I am going to see a man by the name of Colby. John Colby is a brother-in-law of mine. He married my oldest half-sister, and was, of course, a good many years older than myself, as she was. I have not seen him for forty-five years, as nearly as I can recollect.

"My sister, his wife, has been dead many, many years; and any interest I may have had in John Colby has all died out; but I have learned some particulars about his recent life that interest me very much, and I am going to see him. I will tell you something about him. When I was a lad at home, on the farm, John Colby was a smart, driving, trading, swearing yeoman, money loving and money getting. In that rather rude period, when there were not many distinctions in society, when one man was about as good as another, and when there were very few educated persons, he was considered a very smart, active man. I remember him, however, with a sort of terror and shudder. He would pick me up when I was a little fellow, throw me astride of a horse's bare back, and send the horse to the brook. The horse would gallop, and I had to hold on to his mane to keep from being pitched into the river. Colby was a reckless, wild, harum-scarum, dare-devil sort of a fellow. Well, John Colby married my oldest half-sister. She was a religious, good woman; but beaux were not plenty, and John Colby was a fine looking man. His personal habits were good enough, laying aside his recklessness; he was not a drinking man, and he was, as the world goes, a thrifty man. Any of the girls in town would have married John Colby. After he married my sister, I went away to college, and lost sight of him. Finally, he went up to Andover and bought a farm; and the only recollection I have about him after that is, that he was called, I think, the wickedest man in the neighborhood, so far as swearing and impiety went. I used to wonder how my sister could marry so profane a man as John Colby. I think she herself was very much shocked; and I know her father was, who was a religious man. And still Colby was considered 'a good catch.' I came home from

college during vacation, and used to hear of him occasionally; but after a few years—perhaps five or six years—my sister died, and then, of course, all the interest that any of us had in John Colby pretty much ceased. I believe she left a child—I think a daughter—who grew up and was married, and also left a child.

"Now I will give you the reason why I am to-day going up to see this John Colby. I have been told by persons who know, that within a few years he has become a convert to the Christian religion, and has met with that mysterious change which we call a change of heart; in other words, he has become a constant, praying Christian.

"This has given me a very strong desire to have a personal interview with him, and to hear with my own ears his account of this change. For, humanly speaking, I should have said that this was about as hopeless a case for conversion as I could well conceive. He won't know me, and I shall not know him; and I don't intend to make myself known at first."

We drove on, and reached the village—a little, quiet place, one street running through it, a few houses scattered along here and there, with a country store, a tavern, and a post-office. As we drove into this quiet, peaceable little hamlet, at midday, with hardly a sign of life noticeable, Mr. Webster accosted a lad in the street, and asked where John Colby lived.

"That is John Colby's house," said he, pointing to a very comfortable two-story house, with a green lawn running down to the road. We drove along towards it, and a little before we reached it, making our horse secure, we left the wagon and proceeded to the house on foot. Instead of steps leading to it, there were little flagstones laid in front of the door; and you could pass right into the house without having to step up. The door was open. There was no occasion to knock, because as we approached the door the inmates of the room could see us. Sitting in the middle of that room was a striking figure, who proved to be John Colby. He sat facing the door, in a very comfortably furnished farm-house room, with a little table, or what would perhaps be called a light-stand, before him. Upon it was a large old-fashioned Scott's Family Bible, in very large print, and of course a heavy volume.

It lay open, and he had evidently been reading it attentively. As we entered, he took off his spectacles, and laid them upon the page of the book, and looked up at us as we approached, Mr. Webster in front. He was a man, I should think, over six feet in height, and he retained in a wonderful degree his erect and manly form, although he was eighty-five or six years old.

His frame was that of a once powerful athletic man. His head was covered with very heavy, thick, bushy hair, and it was white as wool, which added very much to the picturesqueness of his appearance. As I looked in at the door, I thought I never saw a more striking figure. He straightened himself up, but said nothing until just as we appeared at the door,

when he greeted us with—

"Walk in, gentlemen."

He then spoke to his grandchild to give us some chairs. The meeting was, I saw, a little awkward, and he looked very sharply at us, as much as to say, "You are here, but for what I don't know; make known your business." Mr. Webster's first salutation was—

"This is Mr. Colby, Mr. John Colby, is it not?"

"That is my name, sir," was the reply.

"I suppose you don't know me," said Mr. Webster.

"No, sir, I don't know you; and I should like to know how you know me."

"I have seen you before, Mr. Colby," replied Mr. Webster.

"Seen me before!" said he, "pray, when and where?"

"Have you no recollection of me?" asked Mr. Webster.

"No, sir, not the slightest," and he looked by Mr. Webster toward me, as if trying to remember if he had seen me. Mr. Webster remarked—

"I think you never saw this gentleman before; but you have seen me."

Colby put the question again, when and where?

"You married my oldest sister," replied Mr. Webster, calling her by name. (I think it was Susanna).

"I married your oldest sister!" exclaimed Colby; "who are you?"

"I am little Dan," was the reply.

It would certainly he impossible to describe the expression of wonder, astonishment, and half-incredulity that came over Colby's face.

"*You* Daniel Webster!" said he; and he started to rise from his chair. As he did so, he stammered out some words of surprise. "Is it possible that this is the little black lad that used to ride the horse to water? Well, I cannot realize it!"

Mr. Webster approached him. They embraced each other; and both wept.

"Is it possible," said Mr. Colby, when the embarrassment of the first shock of recognition was past, "that you have come up here to see me? Is this Daniel? Why, why," said he, "I cannot believe my senses. Now, sit down. I am glad, oh, I am so glad to see you, Daniel! I never expected to see you again. I don't know what to say. I am so glad," he went on, "now that my life has been spared that I might see you. Why, Daniel, I read about you, and hear about you in all ways; sometimes some members of the family come and tell us about you; and the newspapers tell us a great deal about you, too. Your name seems to be constantly in the newspapers. They say that you are a great man, that you are a famous man; and you can't tell how delighted I am when I hear such things. But, Daniel, the time is short—you won't stay here long—

I want to ask you one important question. You may be a *great* man; are you a *good* man? Are you a Christian man? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? that is the only question that is worth asking or answering. Are you a Christian? You know, Daniel, what I have been. I have been one of the wickedest of men. Your poor sister, who is now in heaven, knows that. But the spirit of Christ and of Almighty God has come down and plucked me as a brand from the everlasting burning. I am here now, a monument to His grace. O, Daniel, I would not give what is contained within the covers of this book for all the honors that have been conferred upon men from the creation of the world until now. For what good would it do? It is all nothing, and less than nothing, if you are not a Christian, if you are not repentant. If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, all your worldly honors will sink to utter nothingness. Are you a Christian? Do you love Christ? You have not answered me."

All this was said in the most earnest, and even vehement manner.

"John Colby," replied Mr. Webster, "you have asked me a very important question, and one which should not be answered lightly. I intend to give you an answer, and one that is truthful, or I won't give you any. I hope that I am a Christian. I profess to be a Christian. But, while I say that, I wish to add—and I say it with shame and confusion of face—that I am not such a Christian as I wish I were. I have lived in the world, surrounded by its temptations; and I am afraid, John Colby, that I am not so good a Christian as I ought to be. I am afraid I have not your faith and your hopes; but still, I hope and trust that I am a Christian, and that the same grace which has converted you, and made you an heir of salvation, will do the same for me. I trust it; and I also trust, John Colby—and it won't be long before our summons will come—that we shall meet in a better world, and meet those who have gone before us, whom we knew, and who trusted in that same divine free grace. It won't be long. You cannot tell, John Colby, how much delight it gave me to hear of your conversion. The hearing of that is what has led me here to-day. I came here to see with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears, the story from a man that I knew and remember well. What a wicked man you used to be!"

"O Daniel!" exclaimed John Colby, "you don't remember how wicked I was; how ungrateful I was; how unthankful I was. I never thought of God; I never cared for God; I was worse than a heathen. Living in a Christian land, with the light shining all around me, and the blessings of Sabbath teachings everywhere about me, I was worse than a heathen until I was arrested by the grace of Christ, and made to see my sinfulness and to hear the voice of my Saviour. Now I am only waiting to go home to Him, and to meet your sainted sister, my poor wife, and I wish, Daniel, that you may be a prayerful Christian, and I trust you are. Daniel," he added, with deep earnestness of voice, "*will* you pray with me?"

We knelt down, and Mr. Webster offered a most touching and eloquent prayer. As soon as he had pronounced the "amen," Mr. Colby followed in a most pathetic, stirring appeal to God. He prayed for the family, for me, and for everybody. Then we rose; and he seemed to feel a serene happiness in having thus joined his spirit with that of Mr. Webster in prayer.

"Now," said he, "what can we give you? I don't think we have anything that we can give you."

"Yes, you have," replied Mr. Webster; "you have something that is just what we want to eat."

"What is that," asked Colby.

"It is some bread and milk," said Mr. Webster. "I want a bowl of bread and milk for myself and my friend."

Very soon the table was set, and a white cloth spread over it; some nice bread was set upon it, and some milk brought, and we sat down to the table and ate.

Mr. Webster exclaimed afterward: "Didn't it taste good? Didn't it taste like old times?"

The brothers-in law soon took an affectionate leave of each other, and we left. Mr. Webster could hardly restrain his tears. When we got into the wagon he began to moralize.

"I should like," said he, "to know what the enemies of religion would say to John Colby's conversion. There was a man as unlikely to become a Christian as any man I ever saw. He was reckless, heedless, impious; never attended church, never experienced the good influence of associating with religious people. And here he has been living on in that reckless way until he has got to be an old man; until a period of life when you naturally would not expect his habits to change, and yet he has been brought into the condition in which we have seen him to-day—a penitent, trusting, humble believer. Whatever people may say, nothing," added Mr. Webster, "can convince me that anything short of the grace of Almighty God could make such a change as I, with my own eyes, have witnessed in the life of John Colby."

"When we got back to Franklin, in the evening, we met John Taylor at the door. Mr. Webster called out to him:

"Well, John Taylor, miracles will happen in these days as well as in the days of old.'

"What now, Squire?" asked John Taylor.

"Why, John Colby has become a Christian. If that is not a miracle, what is?"—HARVEY'S REMINISCENCES.

And there is one element of his character which must never be forgotten. I mean his deep religious faith and trust. . . . I have been with him on the most solemn occasions, in Boston and at Washington, in the midst of the most exciting and painful controversies, kneeling by his side at the table of our common Master, and witnessing the humility and reverence of his worship.—*Robert C. Winthrop.*

Extract from a communication in the *Tribune* of about the date of Webster's death, headed "Mr. Webster's Tenderness of Soul:"

Mr. Webster and my husband became acquainted in early life, and the friendship of youth extended to riper years. [The somewhat lengthy narrative goes on to relate that this lady's husband, after having lost largely in business, fell dangerously ill. Her oldest child had just died, and while her husband lay sick her only remaining child was taken away. All the while she was tormented by an importunate creditor, who demanded the house. This man had now just left her.] At that moment I heard a rap at the door. I could not rise to obey the summons. I felt that my heart was breaking. But the door slowly opened, and Mr. Webster stood before me. He had come home on a visit, and without knowing anything of our sorrows, he rode over to see and embrace his early friend. What was his surprise to find him thus! And when the story of our troubles had been told, when he had assured himself that his long-cherished friend had but a few hours to live, he sat down and wept.

Then he asked to see the corpse of his little pet, who, when he last visited us, sat upon his knee and played with his watch. As he rose to leave the bed, my husband said in a whisper, "Fetch her to me, that I too may look upon that sweet face once more."

We placed the still beautiful form beside the bed, and, standing near it, gave ourselves up to uncontrollable grief. When able to command his voice, Mr. W. said, "Let us pray." And kneeling there, beside the dying and the dead, he prayed as none but a Christian can pray.

Before Mr. Webster left, the assurance had been given that the widow should be provided for in her affliction.

My husband died the next day. I saw no more of the hard-hearted creditor, and the house remained unsold. I still occupy it, and the room where Mr. Webster kneeled in prayer is to me a sacred place.

MR. WEBSTER TO MRS. LEE.

BOSTON, May 8, 1848.

I thank you, my dear friend, for your sympathy with us under our most severe afflictions; I did not look for these calamities, but I pray for a submissive and reconciled spirit. I know that I must follow my lost children soon; and that we must all be diligently preparing for an exchange of worlds.

A great portion of my life, my dear friend, has been passed with you near me. Poor Grace, who died in your arms! Twice within the week I have looked upon her coffin, and there lies her mother who loved you like a sister; and there lies dear little Charles. The mother and four out of five of her children are already in the same tomb. May God enable me to sustain these overwhelming sorrows, and still always to bless his most holy name!

Nor served thee not that large bucolic life—ix.

MR. WEBSTER ON FARMING.

During a meeting of the United States Agricultural Society in Washington several of the delegates called on Mr. Webster. He received them very cordially in his dining-hall, and after shaking hands with the company addressed them as follows:

"General Wilder and gentlemen of the United States Agricultural Society, I am happy to see you, one and all. Brother farmers, you do me no more than justice when you call me the 'Farmer of Marshfield.' My father was a farmer and I am a farmer. When a boy among my native hills of New Hampshire, no cock crew so early that I did not hear him, and no boy ran with more avidity to do errands at the bidding of the workmen than I did.

"You are engaged in a noble enterprise. The prosperity and glory of the Union are based on the achievements of agriculture. Gentlemen, I will say to you what I have never before said, that when, forty-five years ago, I was called to Dartmouth College to pass my second graduation, I attempted, in my humble manner, to speak of the agricultural resources of the country, and to recommend for their fuller development, organized action and the formation of agricultural societies; and, if memory does not betray me, it was about this period of time that the first agricultural societies in this country were formed in old Berksline and Philadelphia; [loud cheers by the delegates from Pennsylvania and Massachussetts;] and though I have never seen that unimportant production since that day, the partiality of any of my curious friends [bowing and laughing] may be gratified by exploring amongst the slumbering archives of Marshfield. When, some thirty years ago, I went to Marshfield, some of my kind neighbors would call to inquire the state of politics in the South, and others to know a bit of law from 'the Squire.' I told them, 'I have come to reside among you as a farmer, and here I talk neither politics nor law.' Gentlemen, I am naturally a farmer; I am most ardently attached to agricultural pursuits; and though I cultivate my land with some little care, yet, from the sterility of the soil, or from neglected husbandry on my part, in consequence of my public engagements, they afford no subsistence to myself and family. To you, farmers of the West and South, the soil of Marshfield may look barren and unfruitful. Sometimes the breezes of the broad Atlantic fan it; sometimes, indeed, unkindly suns smite it. But I love its quiet shades, and there I love to commune with you upon the ennobling pursuits in which we are so happily engaged. Gentlemen, I thank you for this visit with which you have honored me. My interests and my sympathies are identified with yours. I shall remember you and this occasion which has called you together. I invoke for you a safe return to your homes. I invoke for you an abundant harvest, and if we meet not again in time, I trust that hereafter we shall meet in a more genial clime and under a kindlier sun. Brother farmers, I bid you good morning."

In 1825, the inhabitants of Plymouth county knew nothing of kelp and sea-weed as articles that would enrich their lands; but Mr. Webster discovered their value, set the example of using them, profited thereby, and they are now considered so indispensable that some of the farmers in the country will team it a distance of thirty miles. Principally at his own expense, Mr. Webster laid out a road to the beach on which the kelp was thrown by the sea; and not a single ton of the article is known to have been drawn on land before he went to Marshfield. In October of last year, one hundred and fifty teams were employed after a storm in drawing this rich manure on to the estates adjoining Marshfield, exclusive of those engaged by Mr. Porter Wright. And some of Mr. Webster's neighbors allege that they could well afford to give him five tons of hay a year for having taught them the use of ocean manure.—CHARLES LANMAN.

His noble simple ways—ix.

MR. WEBSTER TO JOHN TAYLOR.

WASHINGTON, March 13, 1852.

JOHN TAYLOR:—I am glad to hear from you again, and to learn that you are all well, and that your teams and tools are ready for spring's work, whenever the weather will allow you to begin. I sometimes read books on farming, and I remember that a very old author advises farmers "to plow naked, and to sow naked." By this he means that there is no use in beginning spring's work till the weather is warm, that a farmer may throw aside his winter clothes, and roll up his sleeves. Yet he says we ought to begin as early in the year as possible. He wrote some very pretty verses on the subject, which, as far as I remember, run thus—

"While yet the spring is young, while earth unbinds
Her frozen bosom to the western winds;
While mountain snows dissolve against the sun,
And streams, yet new, from precipices run,
E'en in this early dawning of the year,
Produce the plough, and yoke the sturdy steer,
And goad him, till he smoke beneath his toil,
And the bright share is buried in the soil."

John Taylor, when you read these lines do you not see the snow melting, and the little streams beginning to run down the southern slopes of your Punch Brook pasture, and the new grass starting and growing in the trickling water, all green and bright and beautiful? And do you not see your Durham oxen smoking from heat and perspiration, as they draw along your great breaking up plough, cutting and turning over the tough sward in your meadow, in the great field?

The name of this sensible author is Virgil, and he gives farmers much other advice, some of which you have been following all this winter, without ever knowing that he had given it:

"But when cold weather, heavy snows and rain
The laboring farmer in his house restrain,
Let him forecast his work with timely care,
Which else is huddled when the skies are fair;
Then let him mark the sheep, and whet the shining share,
Or hollow trees for boats, or number o'er
His sacks or measure his increasing store;
Or sharpen stakes, and mend each rack and fork;
So to be ready, in good time to work,
Visit his crowded barns, at early morn,
Look to his granary and shell his corn;
Give a good breakfast to his numerous kine,
His shivering poultry and his fattening swine."*

And Mr. Virgil says some other things, which you understand up at Franklin as well as ever he did:

"In chilling winter, swains enjoy their store,
Forget their hardships, and recruit for more;
The farmer to full feasts invites his friends,
And what he got with pains, with pleasure spends;
Draws chairs around the fire, and tells once more
Stories which often have been told before;
Spreads a clean table with things good to eat,
And adds some moistening to his fruit and meat;
They praise his hospitality, and feel
They shall sleep better after such a meal." †

John Taylor, by the time you have got through this, you will have read enough.

The sum of all is, be ready for your spring's work, as soon as the weather is warm enough.

And then, put in the plough, and turn not back.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

* Dryden's Virgil, Georg I., 350, considerably altered to fit it to the meridian of Franklin.

† Dryden's Virgil, Georg I., 404. The last six lines are in playful imitation of the original.

He was in the constant habit of reading the Scriptures and attending to private devotion, and on every Sabbath morning he called all his family domestics around him. He read and explained to them the Scriptures and led in prayer. Some four Sabbaths ago was the last time he attended to this duty.—*Rev. Mr. Davis, reporting Mr. Abbott.*

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